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THE MESSAGE OF ISRAEL

THE MESSAGE OF ISRAEL

EDITED AND COMPILED

By

ISRAEL H. WEISFELD

RABBI, AGUDATH ACHIM NORTH SHORE CONGREGATION

CHICAGO, ILL.

TWENTY-FOUR RELIGIOUS ESSAYS AND SERMONS BY OUTSTANDING ORTHODOX, CONSERVATIVE AND REFORM RABBIS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

DR. MEYER WAXMAN

Author of *"A History of Jewish Literature"*

1936

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הנה מה טוב ומה נעים
שבת אחים גם יחד

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity

Psalms 133

"These are the set feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their appointed season."

Leviticus 23, 4

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PREFACE

IN presenting this volume to the attention of the spiritual and lay leadership of all denominations, it is the hope of the editor and compiler that it will be generally regarded as more than a mere collection of sermons and religious essays. Religiously, American Jewry is divided into three distinct camps: ORTHODOX, CONSERVATIVE, and REFORM, and so tautly drawn are the differences in the minds of the adherents of the respective shades of belief that too frequently have animosities, bickerings and misunderstandings flared forth. And oddly enough, in the majority of cases the most militant protagonists have been woefully ignorant of the essential differences.

Nor is it any great consolation to point out that all mistaken notions to the contrary notwithstanding, the Christian religious world is even more hopelessly divided, there being over two hundred Christian varieties in the United States alone at the present time. For, as Professor Conrad Henry Moehlman in his excellent book, "Christian and Jew," points out, "The real issue in the Western world today is not whether Catholicism, Protestantism, or Judaism will survive, but whether *religion* will prosper."

In Russia, Germany, Spain, Mexico—everywhere the foes of religion are gathering their forces to stamp out a belief in God. How essential, therefore, is it that Judaism which gave the concept of God to man, shall present a united front in its stand against this onslaught! In the face of innumerable discriminations

and oppressions from without and a disheartening, withering indifference from within, how urgent is it that the underlying basic principles obtaining in all three camps be accentuated, that the common denominator be exalted and glorified rather than minimized or ignored.

For many years there has been no considerable Jewish immigration into this country, and this absence of recurrent waves of Jewish emigration from various European countries is affording the American Jew the opportunity of a leisurely and conscious crystallization of a distinctive and homogeneous American Jewry and Judaism. Unfortunately, however, the present Jewish adults represent what a prominent educator has termed "the skipped generation," one whose Jewish education has been skipped—a generation which has not enjoyed the privileges of a sound, modern, Jewish training and is consequently, woefully ignorant of its religion and culture. Time, and particularly, recent world repercussions and their effect upon the Jew have awakened most Jews to a consciousness of their spiritual and cultural inadequacies. In greater numbers they now flock to the synagogues and temples and look to the sermon to fill this need. Thus must the sermon serve not only as a means of inspiring the listener to live more righteously and to turn his eyes heavenward, but also to familiarize him with the vast literature of his people with the ultimate hope of stimulating him to more intensive study and appreciation.

PREFACE

It is becoming increasingly manifest to the rabbi, as one of the contributors to this book, Rabbi Levinthal points out in an article elsewhere, that preaching is an art, and that the sermon, in order to really quicken the heart and gladden the soul, must be the result of much study, deliberate thought and a knowledge of human nature. And above all, that while as a liberal, he of necessity is a believer in the principle of Terence, "Homo sum; et humani a me nil alienum puto"—as a rabbi, as the interpreter of Jewish tradition and heritage, his sermon must always possess a distinctively Jewish background to such an extent that even a blind listener would be moved to say, "I know this sermon is being preached by a rabbi; there is an unmistakable rabbinic ring to it." Constant recourse to the Midrashim, Yalkutim, Mechilta, Sifra, Sifre as well as the other branches of our fabulously rich literature will reward him not only with warm, meaningful content, but also with indispensable authoritative force and power for his sermon.

And it is to be sincerely hoped, as another rabbi points out, that the exigencies of the current economic dislocation which have burdened most rabbis with administrative duties righfully belonging to the layman, will not have permanent effects. For, primarily, the rabbi is a scholar and preacher whose duty and sacred obligation it is to exhort and inspire, to bring the spirit of God in an earnest and devout manner to his congregants. In him they must find a bulwark of strength,

one, who because of his deep convictions and earnest belief radiates a spirit of optimism and faith in the ultimate and inevitable rule of right and goodness as part of the Divine Plan. And only through effective preaching can they become infected with this wholesome spirit.

Particularly in these days of moral bankruptcy and general confusion is the sermon vital and potentially powerful. The day of "scientific skepticism" is passing. Repeatedly in recent years have outstanding scientists openly declared themselves devout believers, admitting that there are certain mysteries which science finds itself impossible to penetrate. Religious persecution elsewhere and religious discrimination in this country are causing the most indifferent Jew to look inward—to grope for some inner source of strength. And despite the difficulty encountered by every preacher, that of striking a common mental level, inasmuch as most synagogue audiences vary intellectually from simple, honest but almost illiterate folk to highly cultured and super-critical individuals, it is nevertheless, the privilege of the rabbi through his sermon, to direct the attention of these floundering individuals to a source of inner, abiding, spiritual strength. His sermon must preach not impotent rage or befuddlement even in the face of the most cataclysmic Jewish tragedy—but rather genuine sorrow and a philosophic calm born of implicit faith in Israel's destiny and the survival of permanent values such as justice, righteousness, goodness and brotherhood.

As mentioned above, one of the most interesting phenomena in the development of Jewish religious life in America has been the ascendancy of the sermon in recent years. Aside from classroom instruction, the sermon has become, and promises to become to an even larger extent in the future, the most potent factor in inculcating religious principles in the hearts and minds of the rising generations. Nor is G. K. Chesterton's facetious statement, "Toward the end of the nineteenth century everybody began to write novels because nobody was intelligent enough to write sermons or serious books," applicable to Jewish life. For Jewish sermonic literature is being enriched as never before. Rabbis alert to the numerous problems perplexing the American Jew are reducing their choicest and most provocative sermons to writing, and these sermons cover a variety of subjects and occasions. However, inasmuch as because of economic and other considerations, the vast majority of Jews frequent the Synagogues and Temples mainly on the holidays, it was considered wisest to compile those sermons which have been or will be preached on those important occasions. Also because of a conviction on the part of the editor and compiler that, like its great men, the holidays of a nation are most representative of the thought and philosophy of that nation.

Especially do the Jewish holidays reflect the basic principles of the Jewish faith. Passover with its stress upon personal freedom, Shabuoth, commemorating the receiving of the Divine Charter at Sinai, Yom Kippur,

the day of introspection, self-analysis and atonement, or Chanukah, recalling that glorious struggle for spiritual liberty—all of these festivals breathe the spirit of Jewish idealism and faith. And, inasmuch as the shocking misunderstanding of the Jew on the part of the Christian world is attributable more to an abysmal ignorance of Jewry and Judaism than to willful malice, it is our earnest hope that an authentic and thoughtful presentation of Jewish idealism and belief as expressed through its holidays by outstanding rabbis throughout the country will do much to eradicate this misunderstanding. It is our sincere wish that many copies of this book will find their way into the hands of enlightened Christian clergymen and laymen who, in turn, will impart its contents to their respective audiences and friends. (And the interest manifested in this project by The National Conference of Jews and Christians is a most encouraging sign, indeed.) To these two ends, therefore, is this book dedicated; first, to cause by this united effort of outstanding Reform, Conservative and Orthodox rabbis a closer understanding on the part of the average Jew of the commonness of our cultural and religious heritage and, secondly, to provide for the Christian world not a mere factual text-book, but a significant interpretive presentation of Jewish life and thought as expressed through its holidays.

The contributors to this volume were selected arbitrarily but with an eye to their fitness to present directly or indirectly the philosophy and tenets of their

particular shade of Jewish belief. The results have been most gratifying. The indirect enlargement upon certain principles obviously basic with the authors in the course of their articles, proves in the mind of the editor more enlightening than a formal dissertation on these differences.

The brief biographical sketches preceding the respective sermons are intended to afford the reader a more thorough appreciation of the article because of a knowledge of its writer's background. Inclusion of the origin of each holiday, whether biblical or otherwise (as in the case of Chanukah) is intended for the lay reader who may be unfamiliar with the source of the holiday's observance. In each Festival the rabbis represent the three shades of Judaism, and appear according to the alphabetical sequence of their surname. All biblical quotations appearing in this volume are based upon the standard Jewish Publication Society translation.

Generally, the rabbinical college mentioned in the biographical sketch indicates whether the rabbi is conservative, reform or orthodox. However, there are certain exceptions. Thus, Rabbi Samuel Rosenblatt, a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary which produces conservative rabbis, is himself an orthodox rabbi in every respect and wishes to be so listed, while Rabbi Rudolph I. Coffee, an alumnus of the same institution, considers himself a liberal or reform rabbi.

PREFACE

For certain reasons the Chanukah Festival contains two sermons by reform rabbis.

The editor and compiler wishes to take this opportunity of extending his appreciation to all his colleagues represented in this volume for their graciousness in contributing sermons. He realizes, from personal experience, how arduous a task it is for those generally speaking from notes, written or mental, to take the time and trouble to sit down and write out a sermon, particularly out of season. To Rabbis: Drachman, Levinthal and Mann for suggesting the title, as well as to the others for their splendid suggestions; to the Homiletic Review of New York for its permission to reproduce Rabbi Levinthal's sermon, and to the H. U. C. Tract Commission for Rabbi Levy's sermon. To Dr. Meyer Waxman, noted scholar and author of the celebrated History of Jewish Literature, we are especially indebted for his masterly introduction to this book.

It is the sincere hope of the editor and compiler that this volume, the first of its kind in Jewish sermonic literature, may prove the forerunner of many similar volumes all dedicated to the premise that a conscious crystallization of a specific American Judaism must tend to level and remove rather than engender and magnify differences within the Jewish religious fold.

I. H. W.

Chicago, Illinois,
Chanukah 5696—December 1935.

INTRODUCTION

AN HISTORICAL SURVEY OF JEWISH HOMILETICS AND ITS EFFECTS ON JEWISH RELIGIOUS LIFE

By

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INTRODUCTION

AN HISTORICAL SURVEY OF JEWISH HOMILETICS AND ITS EFFECTS ON JEWISH RELIGIOUS LIFE

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This essay does not intend to give a history of Jewish preaching which, in some of its phases, is as old as the Jewish people itself, and would require, in order to improve upon the classic work of Zunz's Gottesdienstliche Vortraege, a voluminous treatise. It merely aims to present a bird's eye view of this institution which exerted great influence upon the deepening of the religious consciousness of the Jew and to delineate the main features of its development during the ages.

A.
ANCIENT PERIOD
I—Biblical Times

Priest and prophet were, as is well known, the two axes around which the religious development of the people of Israel in ancient times revolved. The province of the first was not only the field of practical religion offering the sacrifices and performing all other prescribed ritual ceremonies, but also that of instructing the people in the observance of the religious precepts and teachings of which he was the custodian. The

*Much of the material in the preparation of Part I of this essay, was borrowed from Zunz's great work "Die Gottesdienstliche Vortraege der Juden." I wish to acknowledge this fact in order to explain the absence of more numerous references to this classical book.

words of Moses, "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy people" (Ex. 19, 6), were not immediately realized, and for a long time the consecrated priest had to act to a great extent as a mediator between the Jew and God and guide him in the performance of his religious duties. Even as late a prophet as Malachi still proclaims, "For the lips of the priest should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth" (Mal. II, 7).

The province of the prophet was that of the living religion, the stimulation of the God-consciousness in the heart of man. As such, he was not hampered by the performance of definite acts nor was his activity circumscribed by time and place. Whenever and wherever the spirit of God moved him, he communicated his experience to his fellow men through the only means at his disposal, namely, the human voice and the passionate language of emotion, through preaching. The story of Saul meeting the itinerant prophets on his way and under their influence becoming temporarily one himself (Samuel IX, 13) illustrates the early free type of inspired preaching par excellence, which we call prophecy.

But even the highest form of human activity cannot remain for long free in its expression, and must sooner or later be limited in one way or another, and prophecy accordingly had to assume some form of regularity. The prophet, in order to be effective, must have an audience to preach to, and such audiences are not found

everywhere and at any time, but must have definite places and stated times for congregating. The places were the Temple courts and the plazas at the gates of the cities, and the times Sabbaths and festivals or other public occasions. It was then that the prophet appeared and delivered his message. He became the preacher at the gate מוכיח בשער (Amos, V, 10; Isaiah XXIX, 21) or the passionate preacher at the Temple court in time of services on the Sabbath and new moons (Isaiah I 14; Jer. VII, 2; 17, 19-27) or on any occasion of public gatherings. The result of at least a part of prophetic preaching is embodied in the books of the Scriptures, which even in their static form still serve all humanity as a source of religious inspiration.

II—Post Biblical Times

The preaching of the prophet, powerful as it was, was occasional and sporadic. But a great change had entered into Jewish life. The people of Israel went into exile and thence a part of it returned to establish a new commonwealth, totally different in character than the first. Henceforth, the people became a veritable people of God, and religion became the very center of its life. No more were they rebellious and perverse and no more were they "laying snares" for the preacher at the gate, but on the contrary, they thirsted for the word of God and waited for teaching and preaching which guided them towards the real life, the life of the spirit. Such was the spirit of the people during a long period, known as that of the Second Commonwealth,

which, in spite of the many political vicissitudes and struggles, conflict of parties, and even occasional outbursts of assimilation was distinguished by its constant religious progress, resulting in the formation of a Judaism which was destined to withstand the devastating effects of time.

The changed temper of the people demanded a change in religious teaching and inspiration. The thundering voice of the prophet ceased to rumble and the function of the priest was limited more to the confines of the Temple worship, and in their place came the scholar who combined the functions of both teacher and preacher.

Ezra begins that line of scholarship which for a millenium carried the intense spiritual activity which both taught the people the ways of practical religion and deepened their religious consciousness. The center of this activity was the Bible, the depository of the law, the soul-stirring orations of the prophets and the deep yearnings of the religious poets and the wisdom of the early sages. The teachers and preachers of the period not only endeavored to make this depository the common heritage of the people, but also to expound it, to apply its laws to a flowing, changing life, and to unfold its religious and ethical teachings in numerous ways so as to convert them from static dicta into dynamic forces, both affecting and creating life.

Already Ezra held public readings of the law, expounded it and penetrated into its deeper meaning as

it is said, "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly and gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading" (Neh. VII, 8). This was the beginning of an institution which grew and expanded through the ages. Tradition rightly ascribes to the men of the great synagogue the institution of reading of the law on the Sabbaths, on the festivals and even on the market days, Mondays and Thursdays. It was, of course, not done all at once. The reading on the Sabbaths and festivals was first introduced, and the other days followed later as the demand for instruction grew apace. The readings were for purposes of instruction both in the practical religion, the result of which was the intensive development of the oral law, and in the living religion, ethics, piety, love of God and Israel, and many similar subjects. This instruction was, of course, oral, for the reading of the law and later of the portions of prophetic and poetic writings *(Nebiim* and *Ketubim)* were only the text while the explanations, enlarging upon the written in many ways were given orally. These oral teachings became then, like the readings, regular features in Jewish religious life, the source of both learning and inspiration.

We thus see in these early sermons of double character, the fountain-head of two great streams in Jewish literature, *Halakah* and *Agada,* which at first were in flowing state and only later converted into written works. The early courses of these streams are not charted but we know definitely that they flowed and their waters freshened and quickened the Jewish spirit.

It is only towards the end of the period of the second commonwealth that they begin to be revealed to us in their full glory. One of the important constituent elements of this religious teaching was the Aramaic translation produced in Palestine known as the *Targum*. The people spoke no more pure Hebrew but a vernacular mixed greatly with Aramaic, and the explanation as well as the contents of the words of the Bible had to be given to them in that vernacular. But this was not merely a translation, but contained numerous explanaions and very often also, short homilies or sermons, or stories and legends. We hear of such *Targumim* in the first century of the common era (B. Sabbath 115a) and the composition of the most important one, that of the prophetic books is ascribed by tradition to Jonathan ben Uzziel, a disciple of Hillel, at the beginning of that century. Moreover, later tradition ascribes the *Targum* even to Ezra (Nedarim 37). Not entering into the discussion of the authenticity of these traditions (1) we can say that they contain much truth, and that elements of these *Targumim* are very old. In fact, they reflect a condition of religious teaching or preaching which was of long standing. The Targum Jonathan to Judges speaks of the Teachers of Israel who instruct their people, when they gather in the synagogues, in the word of God as a constant feature in Jewish life and even praises them that even in time of great suffering they did not cease to perform their function (Jud. ch. V, 2, 5, 9).

This regular Sabbath and festival teaching and preaching was an important feature not only of Jewish life in Palestine, but also of that of the large Jewish communities throughout the Hellenic diaspora and even outside of its sphere of influence. In fact, in these places, the sermon contained more of preaching than teaching of practical religion. The latter was mostly the prerogative of the Palestinian scholars, while the inculcating of the principles of Jewish religion or all other teachings which go under that name of *Agada* was the share of all, for that kind of religious activity was essentially free. We have parts of homilies which were undoubtedly first preached in the synagogues of Alexandria in the second century before the common era, incorporated in a number of the Apocrypha written in that city. The wisdom of Solomon contains a number of such homilies and among them, one describing the all embracing wisdom of Solomon and his mastery of all sciences in a lengthy manner and another one where the stories of the Exodus, of the ten plagues, and of the crossing of the Red Sea, are interpreted in real Midrashic manner, aiming to prove that reward and punishment by God follow the principle of measure for measure *(Middah Keneged Middah)* and that the very instruments of punishment of the Egyptians became the instruments of benefit to the Israelites (2).

For such religious activity during the first century of the Common Era, we have the testimony of Philo who tells us that teaching in religious matters is every-

where dispensed in the synagogues and he calls these institutions, schools of wisdom and holiness where people are taught to follow the way of virtue and the knowledge and observance of the duties towards God and men. He further informs us that the Jews in Rome have synagogues where they are instructed on the Sabbath in the philosophy of their fathers and in their tradition (3).

The Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles abound with references to the regularity of preaching in the synagogues on the Sabbath both in Palestine and in the lands of the diaspora. All the Gospels refer constantly to the preaching of Jesus in the synagogues in many cities and villages of Galilee (4). The Acts tell us of the visits of Paul and his companions in the Jewish communities of Antioch, Damascus, Ephesus, Athens and many more cities where they were invited to preach according to custom or, if uninvited, asked for the permission to preach. We are even furnished with some data about the time the sermon was delivered. Thus, when Paul came to Antioch in Pisidia he and his companions entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day. And after the reading of the law, and the prophets, the officials of the synagogue sent unto them saying "Ye men and ye brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people say on" (5). Paul then delivered his speech. From these we learn that the sermon was preached during the morning service and that it was primarily one of exhortation, aiming at arousing re-

ligious consciousness. This, however, might have been the case in the lands of the diaspora. In Palestine, it was of a more scholarly nature and always contained an element of actual teaching.

From the foregoing, it is clear that by the first century of the Common Era, preaching on regular days and hours was a long established institution in Jewish life in all their settlements, whether in Palestine or anywhere else, and that it was the main agency in spreading both knowledge of Judaism among the people, deepening their religious consciousness, and strengthening their loyalty to God and Israel.

With the destruction of the Temple and the loss of political independence, the institution of teaching and preaching in the synagogue received a new impetus. The synagogue became in all Jewish settlements, in Palestine, in the new center at Babylon as well as in other places, the center of Jewish life. Thither the people flocked for instruction, comfort, and inspiration and thence they derived that courage sorely needed in the bitter struggle for life in exile. The new demands were met by the scholars of the day. The two currents of instruction, that of practical religion, *Halakah,* and of inspirational and ethical, *Agada,* which were for a time intermingled, began to separate. *Halakah* became more fixed in the *Mishnah* with definite rules and regulations, and its study more standardized in the schools and at definite periods during the year. *Agada,* on the other hand, was still in a state of flux and its nature

was free and it afforded latitude for the exercise of the spirit of the individual. As a result, its sphere of activity was widened. It was no more limited to the synagogue and Sabbath or festival service, but extended to other functions of Jewish life, especially to the sphere of the family, such as at weddings and funerals. In Talmudic times, the custom spread that together with the benedictions pronounced both at the ceremony and the wedding feast, the Rabbi present would also deliver a short sermon extolling the importance of marriage or even touching on other subjects (6). Funeral orations were early introduced in that period, and the Talmud and *Midrashim* abound in such short orations. They were pronounced usually on great men, but from the fact that certain scholars specialized in such orations and bore the title *Sapdona* (preacher at funerals), we can deduce that even people of lesser fame were often eulogized by these speakers (7).

As a result of the sphere, province and content of preaching in a narrower sense, Agada began to diverge more from Halakah and the function of teaching practical religion and preaching began to be exercised at times by separate people. Some of the leading scholars specialized primarily in Halakah and neglected the field of Agada. Others, on the other hand, specialized in Agada and were called scholars of Agada under various titles, *Baale Agada* or *Rabanan d'Agadta* (7a). The name *Darshan,* which was originally given to the scholar who distinguished himself in the Halakic interpretation of the Bible (8) was later given to popular

preachers, and the name *Derashah* to the popular sermon whether it was wholly inspirational or contained some Halakic elements (9).

At no time, however, during the period under discussion was the sermon entirely separated from Halakah. Inspirational preaching and teaching in practical religion went to a great exent together, even if the proportion of these two elements was not equal. Most of the preaching was done by the same scholars who were the heads of the academies and who were the leading Tannaim or Amoraim, and only in later times, in Palestine, when suffering became great and the people yearned more for comfort and encouragement in the struggle for existence than for discussions of legal subjects, did some scholars specialize completely in Agada. In Babylon, however, this was not the case. There, preaching was closely connected with teaching, and it was primarily done by the leading scholars of the Academies, and as a result, we find comparatively few people who devoted themselves mainly to Agada.

The public sermon, though, even if delivered by the leading scholars, was, as stated, also in earlier times devoted largely to Agada, and the Halakah occupied a smaller part of it. Thus, we find that Rabbi Meir, when he preached to the public divided his sermon into three parts, one containing Halakah, one general Agada, and one fables and parables (10), from which most likely he drew simple morals which could be understood by those in his audience who were not learned, for we

know that his sermons were attended even by women (11). In later times, the Halakic element was gradually lessened until it was limited to merely prefatory remarks, such as we find in all the Midrashim of the *Yelamdenu* cycle, namely the Tanhuma in its several versions, and also in the Agadic collections which incorporated parts of that cycle, as the Pesikta and several of the large Midrashim, i.e. Debarim and Bamidbar Rabba. In these, many of the sections begin with a Halakic question which bears some relation to a selected topic in the portion of the Pentateuch for the week, and then the discussion of that topic is developed in an Agadic manner. The Halakah is merely used as a device to elucidate the importance of that topic.

The sermon was usually held after the reading of the *Haftorah,* before *Musaph* (12), but as the service grew in length it was at times delivered before the morning service (13), and at times, after the conclusion of the service. We can infer, however, from the construction of most of the important Midrashim, that sermons were also delivered on Saturday afternoons before the Minhah service, whether regularly or not, it is difficult to decide (14). We also know that at least occasionally they were also delivered on Friday nights, as we find the case with Rabbi Meir who was a popular *darshan* (15).

The contents of the sermons were all-inclusive, for while it revolved around passages of the Bible which were employed as texts, it did not always adhere to its

task of explaining or interpreting their meaning, but absorbed many other elements. It taught religion, inculcated ethical truths, related stories about great men of all times, embellished events of the past, glorified learning, comforted the people in their misery, and depicted the future in vivid and glowing colors.

On account of the variability and heterogenuity of the contents, the method employed by these preachers was not the logical one working according to a plan, making one idea the central theme of the discourse. It consisted more of combining a number of short homilies into one long sermon; a number of passages were selected mainly from the portion of the Pentateuch, and each was interpreted and made to yield one or several ideas or morals applying to the daily life of the people. However, even the texts were not interpreted directly, but as a rule, in an indirect way, by the help of the texts taken from prophetic books or from the Hagiographic. Such preliminary discussions were called introductions *(Ptihoth)*, and at times, the main theme of the homily, that is the interpretation of the passage from the Pentateuch is lost in a maze of such introductions. The auditor, though, was not the worse for it, for he was amply compensated by the teachings contained in the introductions. When that text was exhausted, the preacher selected another one. The sermons thus resembled rather a chain consisting of a number of links mechanically connected with each other than an organic oration.

The preachers employed all oratorical devices, such

as illustrations, maxims, proverbs, fables, and parables, and very often, exaggerations, in order to arouse the curiosity and interest of the people. The story told of Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi is a typical one. The Midrash relates that once this scholar noticed while preaching that the people were lagging in interest and some of them even fell asleep. He then exclaimed that there was a woman in Egypt who gave birth to 600,000 children at one time. When the astonishment of the people was thus aroused, he calmly explained that it was Jochebed who gave birth to Moses whose worth and value equalled that of all Israel (16). In general, the rule was to speak pleasantly in order to attract the listeners. Agada, says the Talmund, is compared to water, for the heart of man must be made to thirst after it as it does for water (17).

We thus see what an important role the sermon or preaching in general played in Jewish life during this long period of a thousand years beginning with Ezra and ending with the close of the Talmud, a few centuries later. It was the most effective medium of adult education, and thanks to it, the Jewish masses acquired that spiritual and moral stamina which enabled them to withstand all tribulations and suffering during the Mediaeval Ages.

A great part of the content of these sermons is embodied in the mass of Midrashic literature and the Agada of both Talmuds which were produced in Palestine and Babylonia, the important Jewish Centers of the period. We have sufficient evidence though, that

preaching was a regular religious institution also in other Jewish settlements, not only in earlier times as indicated above, but also in the centuries following the first of the common era (18). The Emperor, Justinian, even found it necessary to issue a special edict against the preachers limiting their discourses to texts taken from the Greek version of the Bible, which would, of course, necessitate their preaching in that language. The reason for this edict was that he suspected the preachers of denunciation of Christianity and its teachings. That in these settlements, sermons were held in the vernacular can be safely asserted.

The Gaonic period follows immediately the preceding one and the type of preaching differed but little from that in Talmudic times. In fact, some of the younger Midrashim were compiled during the centuries of Gaonic activity, and contain much of the sermonic material of the time. Much sermonic material is also found in the early code, the *Sheiltoth* of Achai Gaon composed around 760. As proof of the regularity of the preaching of the sermon can serve us the fact that at the inauguration ceremony of the Exilarch, sermons were delivered by both the Exilarch himself and the Gaon of Sura (19).

B.

MEDIAEVAL PERIOD

The institution of preaching and sermonizing held an important place in Jewish religious life during the long

period of the Middle Ages, but its frequency and effectiveness varied according to time and place. In some Jewish centers, such as in Spain and the Provence preaching was developed to a high degree and as will be seen, was evolved into an art and found expression in many collections of sermons, while in others as in Northern France and Germany, it was cultivated for a time with less ardor, and its development was somewhat slackened until it took a new impetus toward the end of the period.

In general, we can divide the period into two epochs, one ending with the middle of the thirteenth century, and the other from that time until the beginning of the modern period. During the first epoch, preaching was frequent but as it seems, not as regular as in the Talmudic period, nor do we have, with few exceptions, its effects in literature. The reason for the setback which preaching received during this epoch is the great amount of energy expended by the scholars and savants during the Golden Age in other lines of intellectual and spiritual endeavor, such as exegesis, poetry, philosophy, Talmudic studies and kindred subjects. Besides, the fact that the Bible, Midrashim and Talmud became an object of popular study, curtailed to a degree the activity of oral preaching.

Yet, the numerous references we have in literature to *Drashoth, Darshanim,* and also the fact that we know of several men who bore the title Darshan show us that preaching was widely spread, though it varied in localities and was probably not a regular feature of the

Sabbath service, only limited to special Sabbaths and the festivals.

In the eleventh century, we hear of Rabbi Moses ha-Darshan of Narbonne, whose collection of Agadic homilies under the name of Bereshith Rabbatai we possess, and whose homiletic interpretation of the Pentateuch Rashi quotes numerous times. Rashi also speaks of Rabbi Jehudah ha-Darshan (20). Another well-known homilist of this century though not known by the name of ha-Darshan was Tubia ben Eliezer, who hailed from Germany and settled in later life in Greece, and who left a collection of Agadic homilies on the Pentateuch and some of the scrolls under the name of Pesikta Zutrata or Lekah Tob. There were undoubtedly a few more such homilists during the tenth and eleventh centuries who continued the type and method of Midrashic sermonizing. But there were also many other Darshanim whose preaching approached more the type of an address. Rashi and Samuel ben Meir refer to such preachers. Maimonides speaks derogatively of a class of such preachers saying, "Most of these Darshanim explain to the people passages of the Talmud or Midrash dealing with important religious concepts in a way which shows their own ignorance of their real meaning. It were better that they were silent." (21). The *Rekah*, a code written by Eliazar of Worms (1160-1238) at the end of the twelfth century says: "In some places, they read the Midrashim in the interval between the Minhah and the Maarib services, and in some they preach. On the Sabbath there is the

custom to interpret the Scriptures or the Agada" (22). From this reference we see that while preaching was widespread, its place was often taken by a study of the collected Midrashim.

With the thirteenth century there enters a change in regard to the sermon in Jewish life. It received a great impetus in at least two of the great Jewish centers, Spain and the Provence. There it becomes henceforth a greatly developed institution, while in Germany it lagged behind. This was due to the difference in the cultural, spiritual, and political conditions of the Jews of these centers, and also to certain differences in the services between the Sephardim and the Ashkenazim. The former did not encumber their ritual with a multitude of Piyyutim, and recited them primarily only on the High Holidays while the latter did include Piyyutim in the ritual of a large number of Sabbaths. As a result, the service of the former was much shorter and there was time for the sermon, while that of the latter left little room for preaching.

But more effective was the influence of the conditions stated above in Spain and the Provence where Jewish life was much freer. The masses were not as immersed in Talmudic studies as their brethren in the Franco-German center, and were subjected to the influence of general life in a greater degree. Besides, from the thirteenth century on, there spread in those countries among larger strata of the Jewish population philosophic and scientific ideas and concepts resulting from the intense cultivation of these subjects by the savants.

In addition, there was also felt the influence of Christian preaching which was an important feature of the general life. As a result of all these factors, there was a great need for preaching in these centers to spread actual religious knowledge which was lacking among the masses, to combat the laxity in religious practices which was noticed among the Jews in Spain in the thirteenth century due to misinterpretation of the views of Jewish philosophers, and also to counteract Christian preaching.

Thus at the very beginning of the epoch in the first half of the thirteenth century, due to an evident laxity in religious practice in certain Spanish communities a vigorous preaching activity is developed and we find there the first instance of itinerant preaching. Moses of Coucy urged by a strong sense of piety, made a tour of many of these communities and strengthened them in the observance of religious practices, and his sermons were effective. He tells us that due to his preaching, thousands and tens of thousands began to observe again the precepts of Tephilin and Tzitzith in the observance of which they were lax. Others divorced their gentile wives ([23]). In the Provence we find in that century Jacob ben Abba Mari Anatoli the son-in-law of Samuel Ibn Tibbon, a great scientist and a disciple of the philosophers, who preached for a time every Sabbath, and whose collection of sermons was left to us under the name of *Malmad ha-Talmidim* (The Goad or the Pointer of the Students). In his preaching Anatoli aimed primarily to present to the people the im-

portant religious concepts and to show how they tally with the philosophic and scientific notions of the day. He even incorporated, as he tells us, at times, explanations of Biblical verses which he heard from the Christian scholar Michael Acotus with whom he collaborated in the translation of Arabic works at Naples.

From that time on, preaching in Spain became regular, and the number of preachers increased. All leading scholars of the day delivered sermons, some regularly and some occasionally. We possess collections of *Derashoth* Moses ben Nahman (1195-1270), by Nissim ben Reuben, the successor of Solomon Ibn Adret at Barcelona, by Joel Ibn Shaib, a famous preacher of his time and by many more scholars and preachers.

The sermons were of a higher type, and regular addresses. They had a central theme which was logically developed and were provided with introduction and text. On the whole, the sermons were intended not only to be inspirational but also to teach, and accordingly most of them were tinged with philosophic views and some were even more philosophic discourses than sermons.

This tendency is especially evident in the fifteenth century sermons. Stimulated by polemic attacks against Judaism, by Christian priests, by converts who often advanced arguments borrowed from the scholastic philosophy of the day, the Jewish preachers aimed to defend the exaltedness of the teachings of their religion and endeavored to prove their identity with philosophic views. A number of scholars philosophically inclined

went to extremes and aroused great opposition. Hayyim Ibn Mussa, the author of the polemic work against Nicolas de Lyra, *Magen We-Romak,* in a letter to his son Judah denounces these preachers severely. "They discuss," says he, "syllogisms, quote Aristotle, Alexander, Themistius, Plato, and Ibn Roshd, but omit the names of our own sages. The Torah is waiting on the pulpit like a woman forsaken by her husband, but the preachers pay no attention to her." (24). He further relates how often pious people protest against such preachers and leave the synagogue in the middle of the sermon.

Such protests undoubtedly stopped excesses, but not the general tendency of preaching to present the teachings of Judaism in a rational way, adorned with philosophic views and opinions. The best collection of sermons of such type is the Akedah by Isaac Erama, known as *Akedath Yitzhak.* We are told in the preface that it was the custom in the communities of Aragon for the Jews to attend the sermons of the Christian preachers and they admired their eloquence and their rational explanations of the Scriptures. Erama was, therefore, moved to preach in a similar strain and to devote his sermon to explain the contents of the Bible, the morals derived from the stories, the purposes of the precepts and to expound theological views. He was opposed to the philosophical preachers who dwelt more on philosophy than on Jewish teachings and even preached special sermons against their views, collected in a treatise entitled *Hosuth Kashah,* but he was also a

lover of philosophy and science. He, therefore, included many such views in his sermons and even dealt with ethics and social philosophy. Each sermon has a central theme based not on a single verse of the Bible, but on a section of the portion of the week. The text is usually taken from the Midrash.

The Akedah served as a model for the preachers of numerous generations who imitated both its content and method, and that type of preaching was known, especially in Poland, as *Mehkor* (philosophical or theological discussion).

From the end of the fifteenth century, preaching becomes a regular and important institution in all the lands where the Spanish Jews settled after the expulsion, especially in the Turkish Empire and Italy. In both of these countries it was made the duty of the Rabbi to preach regularly every Sabbath, and the number of preachers who left us collections of their sermons runs into the hundreds (25), among them such famous sermonizers as Moses Alshek in the Orient (he lived in Safed, Palestine) and Judah Moscato, and Asario Figo in Italy whose works were a *vade mecum* with preachers for several centuries. As an illustration how great the demand of the masses was for preaching in Italy in the seventeenth century can serve us the story told by Jacob Zahlon, that when the synagogues in Ferrara were closed on account of the plague, he preached to the people who gathered in the street through an open window in his house (26).

The contents of the sermons as embodied in the

homiletic books vary. Some are of an expository nature, some deal with ethics, and some delve in philosophic or Kabbalistic subjects. Texts were always used and very frequently two, a Biblical called *Maamor* and Talmudic or Midrashic called *Nose ha-Derush* (The subject of the sermon). As a rule, there is also an introduction tinged with more or less philosophical ideas. There is a central theme but the construction is loose, as the sermon is usually interspersed with expository, short homilies on passages of the Pentateuch, Psalms, Proverbs, or of prophetic books.

The sermons were in most of the Spanish and Portuguese congregations preached in the vernacular and probably in Italian in Italian congregations. They were, however, translated into Hebrew by the preachers themselves and published, but there are also many collections of sermons written in the above named languages.

Turning to Germany and Poland, we observe that up to the sixteenth century, preaching while frequent, was not regular, both on account of the length of the service as related above, and especially because of the complete immersion in Talmudic studies. The Rabbi, as a rule, preached three times a year on the Sabbaths before Passover, before the Day of Atonement (Shabath Teshubah), and on the eve of that day. That sermons were preached also on other occasions goes without saying. From the beginning of the seventeenth century, there is noted a greater demand for preaching both in Germany and Poland as well as in the other Slavonic

countries. This was probably due to the lessening of Talmudic study among the masses, which resulted from suffering and the bitter struggle for existence. In Poland, it came as a result of the terrible massacres in 1648 which devastated a large number of Jewish communities. Henceforth, preaching on Sabbath afternoons became regular and special preachers were appointed for that purpose—the preaching of the Rabbi was still limited to three times annually—who were called *Darshanim* or *Maggidim*. Smaller congregations who could not afford a regular preacher were visited occasionally by traveling preachers who were paid for their services, and thus there developed a class of itinerant Maggidim who sermonized any day of the week before the evening services. This form of preaching is still continued in Eastern Europe even today, and to a limited degree also in this country.

The sermons were mostly pietistic, but to a great degree also expository. There was seldom a central theme; as a rule, the *Derashah* consisted of a string of passages both from the Bible and Midrash, each of which presented a difficulty and demanded a solution. The interpretation of the last passage, however, served as a means for the removing or dissolving of all the difficulties in the previously cited passages. There were a few of the Maggidim, though, who by the study of the better works of the Spanish, Italian, and Oriental preachers, tried to imitate them and preached sermons dealing with ethics and theological problems. Some on the other hand, attempted to display in the *Derashah*

their keen-mindedness and combined Halakah and Agada, and introduced the pilpul method in the sermon. There was hardly systematic construction in the sermons, but each section had its own moral and evolved some religious teaching. Yet with all the difficulties, the sermon was very effective, for it was permeated with a spirit of piety, love of God, Torah and Israel. It was a source of inspiration and comfort to the Jewish masses, and also a means of education, for they were introduced to numerous parts of the Bible and to a multitude of Talmudic and Midrashic passages. The Maggidim also employed illustrations and even humorous stories, and in addition frequently chanted their sermons in accordance with a certain melody, all of which combined to make it interesting and pleasing to the auditors. All sermons, as a rule, ended with a plea for the coming of the Messiah ובא לציון גואל, and thus the *Derashah* contributed towards perpetuating the yearning for redemption and the love for Palestine in the hearts of the people.

C.

THE MODERN PERIOD

With the great and fundamental changes which entered into Jewish life during the modern period, there came also changes both in the position of preaching in the religious life of the Jews and in its nature and character. On the whole, it was a time of constant ascendancy for preaching and the sermon ultimately became the most important expression of public or social re-

ligion. But this progress was not attained without struggle, nor was it uniform in all Jewish centers. As a manifestation of Jewish life, sermonizing was subjected to all the conditions of that life and its vicissitudes in different countries. The kaleidescopic and checkered aspect which Jewish life presents in the comparatively short period of the last hundred and fifty years is completely reflected in all its phases, movements, currents, and cross-currents in the story of the development of the Jewish sermon in the period under discussion. It will, of course, be impossible for us, on account of the multiplicity of the changes and deviations to trace that story in a way even approaching a detailed treatment and we shall therefore, limit ourselves to merely delineating its main tendencies and purposes.

We will begin with Germany. There, the effects of modern conditions upon Jewish life were first felt in a very vigorous manner. As is well known to students of Jewish history, German Jewry was already emptied of traditional Jewish learning as early as the beginning of the last century. Here and there, were still to be found great Talmudic scholars who filled the Rabbinical positions in Jewish communities, but the masses were growing daily more and more ignorant of Judaism, and simultaneously, piety lessened among them, and interest in religion waned. In many congregations, daily services ceased altogether or were attended by a quorum of old men specially hired for the purpose. It was then that the movements known to us as those of

enlightenment and reform arose, the general aim of which was, notwithstanding the methods adopted by the leaders, and some of their practical aspects about which much derogatory criticism can be expressed; to reconcile Judaism with the spirit of the time, and to save as much of the Jewish religion as possible.

It was natural that under such conditions, the champions of these movements should seize upon the sermon as the surest means of rehabilitating Jewish religious life. They saw in it, since the Sabbath services became almost the sole expression of religion among the Jews, the best-suited instrument for conveying some religious teaching to the Jewish masses who were gradually drifting away from tradition. Accordingly, the sermon came into great prominence in the religious life of German Jewry, but was, of course, much changed in content and form, especially in the latter, as it was preached in pure German.

However, the new institution of the regular German sermon on the Sabbath did not assume its important place in the life of that Jewry without opposition. Many there were at the beginning of the last century who struggled against the innovation, and vigorous protests were voiced by the Rabbis of the older school who were not used to preaching, nor could they master the German language. They rightly felt that the ascendancy of preaching would change the entire type of the Rabbinate, and that ultimately it will not be the Talmudic scholar who will gracefully occupy the Rabbinical seats in Jewish communities but the effective

preacher in German. However, all this opposition availed little against the demands of life, and after some struggle, the German sermon became, as a great preacher and teacher of homiletics expressed himself at the end of the last century, "The very center of the Jewish service in the synagogue" (28) and that, in the service of all Jewish factions in Germany, whether reformed, conservative or strict orthodox. It did not take long, and the leaders of the various religious trends in that Jewry understood that under the conditions of modern life, preaching in the language spoken by the people is both an adroit weapon for the defense of the religious views they advocate, as well as an effective means for their inculcation in the hearts of the followers. Germany was in this instance followed by the other Jewries of Western Europe and as a result, the sermon in the vernacular reigned supreme and probably still reigns in the religious life of a great part of world Jewry.

So far, as regards the position of the sermon in Jewish life. As for its form, it, of course, had to undergo, of necessity, many changes from the traditional historical type heretofore discussed. The form, both as a result of the fact that the sermon was preached in the European languages, and on account of the changed tastes of the audiences, had to conform to the type of religious oration prevailing in general life. It could be no more of the discursive *Midrashic* type, nor even of the loosely constructed homily current in the Mediaeval age; but had to follow the form of the well

elaborated, logically and rhetorically constructed secular speeches of the highest order. It had to have not only a central theme, but the development of that theme had to proceed in a systematic manner, and the parts well-proportioned. Nor could the style and diction be neglected; for the sermon, on account of its position in the service had to exert some influence upon the people to whom it was delivered, at least momentarily, and had to appeal to the heart and imagination of the auditors. The preacher consequently was compelled to use all devices possible to perfect the sermon so that it attain its aim. Preaching thus became not only a means of conveying religious teachings, but also an art to be cultivated and pursued with a technique akin to the one employed in all arts which appeal to the emotions of men and their artistic sense.

As for the content of the sermon, it can be said that though it was at times used, especially by liberal preachers, for polemic purposes to prove the necessity of reforms in Judaism or to demonstrate the compatibility of Judaism with the latest currents in philosophic thought; on the whole, it kept close to the historic character of Jewish preaching. Most of the earnest preachers in Germany, during the last century, felt with Maybaum that the less the Hebrew service is understood by the worshippers, and the more difficult the observance of the Sabbath becomes, the more urgent it is the duty of those who strive to maintain Judaism to influence the people religiously through the sermon so as to save at least a few hours of that Sab-

bath for religious devotion (29). They therefore endeavored to make the sermon both a means of conveying Jewish teaching as well as an instrument of inspiration for Jewish religious values. Almost all the preachers used texts in Hebrew, and many of them, such as Mannheimer, Jellinek, Michael Sachs, and others of the conservative type interspersed the sermon with many quotations from the Talmud and Midrash and thus enabled the auditors to gain some knowledge, though most slight, of the treasures of Jewish lore. Preaching, as a rule, centered around the Biblical portion of the week, from which a religious or an ethical lesson was drawn. Some times, a master preacher, as Jellinek, preached not on a text, but on the contents of a small Biblical book. Jellinek preached five sermons on the five Scrolls, and five sermons on the creation of man in the image of God, with reference to the passage of creation in Genesis I. At times, his sermons were more scholarly than exhortative, delivering five sermons as an introduction to the Torah or the Pentateuch, and two on the Talmud. He was not alone in this type of preaching, as many others preached in a similar vein. In all these forms of preaching, we can note that the Bible, in the manner it was interpreted by the Rabbis was the center of the sermon, and that the preachers believed that the Scriptures contain an eternal pattern of religious thought and action which, with some modification, can be applied to all times and circumstances. (30).

Due, of course, to a more or less liberal tendency

which was followed by the majority of the German Jewish preachers, except those of the ultra-orthodox school, the emphasis in the sermons was usually laid upon the social and ethical precepts rather than on the pure religious, and in this particular effort we can say that the preaching was successful. Much of the deep interest in charity as well as in allied humanitarian endeavors of the Jews in Germany, and also of their colonies in other countries, can be credited to the influence of a century of preaching.

The case was different in Eastern Europe, especially in Russia. There, where conditions in Jewish life remained for a long time little changed, and where learning, study and piety were not much affected by the modern spirit, preaching likewise continued in its old ways, and only occasionally there arose a great preacher, such as Jacob Dubnow, known as the *Dubner Maggid*, famous for his gift of using illustrations from life, or parables *(Meshalim)*. It was only during the second half of the last century, when through the influence of both the general conditions in Russia and the spread of enlightenment, rigorous piety began to slacken and a slight laxity in religious observance was manifested among the Jewish masses that preaching became widespread in Jewish communities and assumed increasingly an inspirational form. Numerous itinerant preachers toured the Jewish towns, and delivered sermons not only on Sabbath afternoons, but on week days before the *Maarib* services. Some of these preachers were very gifted and became famous,

such as the *Kelmer Maggid* who toured Russia and Poland for years, and was known as a powerful preacher who possessed great ability to move an audience to repentance. He was of the revivalist type and he chastised the people severely for their laxity in religious observances and neglect of their duties both against God and against their fellow men. He left a lasting impression on his generation. The spread of preaching brought about also a change in the form of preaching, especially since itinerant preaching became a profession. Each preacher strove to please the audience to the best of his ability, for his remuneration was voluntarily raised by passing the collection plate, and depended on the size of the audience and their satisfaction with the sermon. Consequently, the form was greatly improved, illustrations began to be employed, humor injected and the sermon was as a rule chanted in a melodious voice, all of which made it pleasing to the audience as a form of amusement and enjoyment, and contributed to the popularity of this type of sermonizing.

In the eighties, with the rise of the national movement a new note entered into Jewish preaching in Eastern Europe, that of propoganda. A new type of itinerant preacher appeared in the Jewish towns and cities, more modern and trained. They followed the ways of the *Maggidim* and spoke in the synagogues before *Maarib,* but they discarded the old name and called themselves *Matifim,* i.e. speakers with a prophetic ring. With the change of name there came also a change of

content. No more was religious observance the burden of the speech, but contemporary problems, Jewish education, the sufferings of the people under the Czarist regime, the improvement of manners, and finally, with some of the *Matifim,* the colonization of Palestine. The form was still more improved; the language, though Yiddish, was of a literary character, oratorical devices employed, and the *Maggidic* chant substituted by the oratorical tone. The most distinguished among the new type of speakers were Hayyim Maccabi *(Kaminitzer Maggid)* and Zebi Hirsch Maslianski. Both left a great impression upon the masses, and their successors were numerous. With the progress of the national movement and the occurrence of changes in Jewish life in Russia during the nineties and at the beginning of the century, that type of preaching gained in popularity greatly, and was followed by *Maggidim* and Rabbinical preachers. As a result, the sermon swung rapidly towards the emotional oration and very frequently terminated with an appeal for funds. Texts were, of course, still used; however, the center of preaching was no longer religious and ethical teaching or the explanation of difficult Biblical or *Midrashic* passages, but rather the emotional propogandistic element.

The development of preaching in this country followed in the main that of its two phases in Europe, namely the German and the East-European. The Jews of Western Europe who settled in this country and who were overwhelmingly of German origin brought over their Rabbis and along with them their type of preach-

ıg. They introduced regular Sabbath preaching and ıe sermon, later preached in English, was of a dignified haracter with text and quotations. A religious or thical lesson was usually derived, and it fulfilled a real ınction in religious life. Its character was not changed ıuch even when the time of the sermon was changed › late services on Friday night instead of Saturday ıorning. This was the case up to the end of the first ecade of this century.

Preaching among the East-European part of Ameri-an Jewry likewise retained its former type. The im-ıigrant Rabbis and *Maggidim* who settled in this coun-·y continued their *Drashoth* and sermons on Saturday fternoon, and frequently on week days before *Maarib* ı the same manner as they were used to deliver them ı their home towns across the sea. Some emphasized eligious observance and some continued expounding *Midrashic* passages and solving their inconsistencies. lowly the situation changed, the new conditions of life ffecting also that phase of religious activity. The num-er of worshippers on week days steadily diminished, nd simultaneously also the number of those who came n Saturday afternoon. Preaching began to be limited ıore and more to the Sabbath morning service, and till later, even in orthodox congregations, to Friday ight. The old type preacher was gradually pushed ut of the synagogue and the new type, the *Matif*, the ›eaker, the propagandist came into popular favor. ·ven the Rabbis of the old school had to change their ıode of preaching and follow the new pattern with

greater or lesser success.

The change in American preaching in both its aspects became still greater, the English and the Yiddish sermon (the line of demarcation does not run any more between the German and East-European elements of the Jewry of this country but between the more or less Americanized) since the outbreak of the World War. On the one hand, the need for raising funds for the relief of the Jews in Europe, for the rebuilding of Palestine, for Jewish education, and kindred causes, demanded that the Rabbi—preaching became almost entirely the province of that functionary, for the itinerant preacher disappeared — turn into the emotional speaker and appeal maker. The religious, educational and constructive elements of the sermon dwindled into insignificance and the flamboyant, the propagandistic, the oratorically stirring features became the predominating. On the other hand, the spread of scientific ideas, the laxity of religious belief among the more intellectual visitors of the synagogues or Temples, the great interest in changes in social relations as well as in the standards of morality, and in the literature reflecting these changes, robbed the English sermon of its religious features. No more is the Rabbi the religious preacher and the expounder of the word of God, but rather the popular lecturer on all the subjects mentioned above in which his audience is supposed to be greatly interested. He is also the book-reviewer, and the reporter of current events. The complaint of Hayyim Ibn Mussa of the philosophical *Darshanim* of

his day quoted by us above (p. XXI) can with some modification be applied to much of the preaching of today, except that we will have to substitute for logic and meaphysics, sociology and fiction, and for Aristotle and his commentators, several authors of best sellers and a few popular writers on the subjects. One corner is still left for the sermon which approaches to a degree the traditional type, that is the High holidays, but at times even that corner is encroached upon by the new form of preaching.

We have thus reached the end of our journey during which we noted the great role which preaching played in Jewish religious life in all times and places. We observed that the primary function of the sermon from prophetic days to our own was to keep the religious consciousness alive in the hearts of the people and to instruct and edify them. We also noted the recent deviation from that role and function. It is not within the limits of this survey to seek to remedy the situation, but one thing seems to be clear: that Jewish preaching, if it does not want to break with the long tradition of the past, must continue also in the future, as the organ of instruction in the ways of God and the means of preservation of a living Jewish religious consciousness.

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(1) For a discussion of these problems, see Waxman's History of Jewish Literature Vol. I, Ch. V.

(2) Wisdom of Solomon Chas. VII, 17-22; XI, 5-16.

(3) In Flaccum, De Vita Mosis, Ligatio ad Cajum 1014.

(4) Mathew, IV, 23; IX, 35; Morc. I, 21, 39. Luc. IV, 15, 31, 44.

(5) Acts, Ch. XIV, 23, 24, also XIV, 14, 15, 16; XVII, 19, 26.

(6) Berakoth 6b and other places.
(7) Moed Katan 25b.
(7a) Baba Bathra 8a.
(8) Pesahim 70a.
(9) Zunz P. 223, note c.
(10) Sanhedrin, 38.
(11) J. Sota, I, 4.
(12) Berakoth, 28.
(13) Ibid 3a.
(14) S. J. Rappaport in Erek Milim, Article Aftarta.
(15) J. Sota, 1, 4.
(16) Midrash Canticles, Ch. I.
(17) Hagiga, 14a.
(18) Zunz, Gottesdienstliche Vortraege, P. 348.
(19) Seder ha-Yeshiboth by Nathan Cohen of Babylon, included in the Yuhasin.
(20) Zunz, Gott. Vor. P. 416; note C. I could not find the citation in our text of Rashi.
(21) Commentary to tenth chapter of Sanhedrin Helek.
(22) Rekah Sec. 56.
(23) Semag, Introduction, Part II, Sec. 3, Part I, Sec. 112.
(24) Quoted by Steinschneider from a Manuscript in Kayserling's Homiletische Beilage P. 34.
(25) For a list of the famous Darshanim see Zunz G. V. pp. 332-35.
(26) Quoted by S. Back in Winter and Winsche Jud. Literature Vol. II S.
(27) S. Maybaum, Judische Homiletic, P. 19.
(28) Ibid, P. 20.
(29) Cf. Maybaum, Ibid P. 24.
(30) Ibid P. 24.

ROSH HASHANAH

In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall be a solemn rest unto you, a memorial proclaimed with the blast of horns, a holy convocation. Ye shall do no manner of servile work; and ye shall bring an offering made by fire unto the Lord.

Leviticus 23:23-25.

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THE WAY UP

by

LEO JUNG

The dark days of German Jewry are the dark days of humanity. The slow economic and social strangulation of 600,000 of our brethren in the Hitlerite prison, transcends in cruelty the wiles of Pharaoh and the ruthlessness of the Czar. It is our sacred duty to defend Germany's benefactors in this war declared on them by Germany's destroyers. The world boycott may cause the junkers and their vassal, Hitler, to change their tactics. The sympathy for our people on the part of increasing numbers of enlightened non-Jews, is a source of comfort and strength. But the poison of Hitlerism is spreading. His emissaries are sowing the seeds of inhumanity with German efficiency in the boulevards of Madrid, in the pampas of South America, and in our own city. The Holy Land is a haven of refuge to tens of thousands. Jerusalem still gives strength and life to Israel throughout the diaspora. But what we need above all is the dynamic spirit of Jewishness, the spirit of pride, strength, fearlessness, wherewith to face the enemy, measure his strength, and gird for battle. We need a positive trust in God that will propel us into action, without evidence of cowardice and compromise. How can we draw living waters from the wells of salvation?

In the last days of his life, our teacher Moses seems more and more to have escaped the limitations of a hu-

man being. His vision embraced the distant future as well as his own scene. As he moved towards eternity, his mind transcended space and time; and his words uttered on the hill near the Promised Land have proved a true prophecy of Israel's character and destiny.

He foresaw the problems that his strong-willed, stiff-necked people, vacillating from the golden calf to the sanctuary, would have to face on their march through the ages. Without the spiritual influence of their own soil, exiled from Eretz Yisrael, orphaned among the hostile nations, there could be no way out for Israel except the way up. There was none to rely upon except our Father in Heaven. Moses expressed this thought in a beautiful parable: "As an eagle that stirreth up her nest, hovereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her pinions, so did the Lord lead them." The eagle does not directly protect her little ones by flying below them to ward off the arrow of the hunter. She soars above them, teaching them to fly upward, in order to escape the enemy's weapon. So does Moses imply that God trains His children to look up into a realm inaccessible to the weapons of the enemy.

II

There is nothing more touching than the last words of Moses, found in the *Sefer Debarim*. They are of a simplicity and strength unmatched in the whole of biblical literature. Their message sounds as clearly and warmly and trenchantly to us as it did to Israel in

the wilderness. Moses summed up the position of Jewry throughout history in one sentence: "Behold! I set before you this day a blessing and a curse." The Midrash adds its comment to this verse. The problem of Israel may be compared to that of a servant to whom his master says "I offer you a gold chain about your neck; but if you refuse, you will have to take a chain of iron." At first glance, the Midrash does not add anything to the statement in the Bible. Yet its meaning is readily discernible.

A man may be wise, mediocre or foolish; learned, ignorant or of average education; a coward, a man of caution or a foolhardy hero. There are always three groups to choose from. But it is different with a Jew. He has only two roads to take. Either he accepts Judaism as the self-evident purpose of his life, as his normal environment, or he rejects it and seeks to escape it. Either he translates Judaism into the many forms of his life and derives peace, balance, health from it; or he endeavors to shed his Jewish characteristics, to deny his duties, to destroy his racial memory by aping an alien culture, and assumes the unworthy role of the modern Godless Jew.

Professor C. G. Jung, the great psycho-analyst of the University of Zurich, in his "Modern Man in Search of a Soul," speaks of the general neurosis of our time. This is described as a widespread feeling of the senselessness and emptiness of human life. He declares that of the thousands of patients who flock to him from many countries, none who have not regained

a religious outlook have been really healed. His volume represents thirty years of effective psycho-therapeutic practice, and ample knowledge from the study of both books and life. If that diagnosis is correct with regard to the ailment of the modern mind, it applies with double force to the modern Jew. None is more unstable emotionally than the Jew of our century. At no other time have we witnessed such unintelligent worship of fleeting fads on the part of our men and women. From all countries comes the tale of Jews neurotic, unable to stand the strain of dynamic living, unable to face the problems of themselves and their children, at the mercy of demagogues, crumbling before the slightest disaster, inhibited and plagued by complexes which make their life a torture to themselves and a source of annoyance to others.

None have tried harder than a certain section of German Jewry to escape Jewishness. They eliminated every reference to Zion from their prayer book. Hebrew became almost the forbidden language to them. They looked upon themselves as a unique entity and upon their Eastern brothers as objects of charity. They studied German literature, history and institutions with the zeal of fanatics, with the devotion of martyrs. In no country did Jewry contribute to the glory of the fatherland as fully, successfully and abidingly as in Germany. They dedicated their Jewish thoroughness to commentaries on Goethe. They wove Jewish ingenuity into their text-books on law. They built up schools of medicine. They composed German war-

songs. They inspired the German battle-cry. They developed the German theatre. They created German social service, breathing the spirit of Jewish kindness into the deadly armor of Prussian knights. They denied their names, their parents, their grandparents—the entire past from Moses to Moses Mendelssohn. There were no assimilationists like German assimilationists. There were no Jewish Jew-haters like the German Jewish Jew-haters. What was their harvest? Jacob Wasserman will tell you, and the tragedy of Walter Rathenau, and the streets of Jewish despair in every German town in 1933. Bruised, blinded, shamed, the German Jews can tell the story of the double harvest of contempt and loneliness that comes to the Jew who would deny his Jewishness.

Hitler drove Jews to Jewry. One of the most pathetic incidents of last Pesach concerns some dejudaized Jews in Frankfort who, for the first time in their lives, attended a Seder and, with ineffable emotion, watched the deathless drama of freedom as it was unfolded in song and prayer. And, in the midst of the service, one broke forth with the passionate cry: "I never knew that this was Judaism! I never dreamed of such treasures. Can I come back, do you think, to all this? Will it make me as happy and peaceful as all of you round this table?"

How great the dishonor of the cowardly Jew who would knock at the doors of even the lowest of non-Jews, hoping that they might magnanimously overlook his Jewish face, name or traditions! There is no coun-

try today without the miserable type of un-Jewish Jew —denying Judaism, yet bearing the earmarks of the outward ghetto.

III

We simply cannot escape Judaism. We cannot escape Jewishness. As subtle punishment, the honorless Jew seems to attach to himself an attitude of cringing apology. Indeed, many of us carry this unnecessary burden, this apologetic attitude, this lack of joy and pride in our heritage.

A trivial incident during my visit to the Holy Land may illustrate what I mean. One morning I asked a bootblack in Tiberias: "Are you a Jew?" Now, what would you have answered if that question had been addressed to you? How many of you would have stammered and blushed and felt ashamed? What did the bootblack say? "A Jew, baruch hashem!" "Thank God, I am a Jew!"

Now, this bootblack had not gone to the university. He had not read endless pamphlets on the reasons for feeling proud and happy in our Jewishness. He probably did not know of our contributions to humanity, to literature, to philosophy, to the sciences, to social progress. He may not even have been familiar with Jehudah Halevi or Maimonides, with Isaiah or Moses—yet he was proud, without being boastful. He smiled as he spoke. He did not visualize in his sub-conscious mind an enemy challenging his pride. It was out of a fullness of inward peace and strength that his significant

words were uttered. He had had the advantage of a Jewish environment, of a Jewish communal life which speaks in a thousand ways, with a thousand nuances to the Jew, inspiring him, upholding him, causing him to glow inwardly and smile outwardly. "Thank God, I am a Jew!"

How can we obtain that spirit for ourselves? No logic will help us. No Jews went to the auto-da-fe because of syllogistic cognitions of Jewish values. No Jews kept up the stubborn fight because of a theoretical acceptance of Jewish doctrine. No Jew truly appreciated emancipation from medieval bigotry who looked upon such emancipation as an end in itself. Neither will the laborious effort to prove our religion in tune with modern thought, produce such natural Jewish happiness. Modern thought will yet have to show itself productive of even a fragment of the good, the true, and the beautiful which Jewish thought and Jewish life have brought forth in the fields of human endeavor.

That dynamic Jewish spirit, that source of inner peace, of self-respect, of buoyancy, of holy living, of communal righteousness, that combination of good will and intelligence depends for its fruition on something that the bootblack had, but which the modern Jew has lost—the Jewish environment. The Jewish way of life, the whole of our laws and ceremonies, is meant to create such an environment, such a basis for daily thought and action in home, synagogue and nation, as would assure us the basic psychic vitamins. This

would absorb our major energies, challenge our spiritual and ethical ambitions, and bring us to understand that the attitude of the Gentile toward us is incidental: that the Jewish life is fundamental for the Jew. In the deepest sense, Jewishness makes the Jew happy: it means clothing him in dignity.

We ought to welcome consciousness of our problem. There are but two ways. Our children at college may be urbane, stable, non-neurotic or they may be furtive, overbearing, ignorant. Our men in public affairs may change their names, friends, associations, apartments, summer cottages, golf clubs, in the hope of escaping the "unpleasant consequences of being a Jew," and they will find themselves at last out of the Jewish camp, not admitted to the Gentile fold, and shivering in the hostile atmosphere of the border line; or else, they may recognize our position, see how much good there is in Jewish life, the glory that is Zion and the happiness that is Jerusalem, the beauty and light of our Torah, and pledge their fealty eagerly, out of a timeless urge to realize the ideas of their past.

On a Rosh Hashonah, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov heard his flock crying to God, "Inscribe us in the book of life," with tears and beating of the breast. "Why do you cry like that, my children?" he asked. "You do not have to pray so tearfully. By your own firm will to Jewishness you can easily inscribe yourself in the book. Everyone inscribes himself into the book of life." There are two books open before every Jew; one spells a hopeless endeavor to escape and deny, the

other a cheerful embracing of the Torah, a glad acceptance of Jewish life. There is no third choice.

Arousing your Jewish pride will give you momentary satisfaction; organized ill-will will defeat it. Stimulating Jewish consciousness is not enough. Nationalistic self-aggrandisement has a way of changing into depression-mania. Healthy national consciousness needs a soil in which to grow.

Our women will find strength in laboring for the Jewishness of their homes. To be bearers of spiritual beauty is their destiny. Our youth needs *limud ha Torah,* "Torah study," with Jewish life. Now that the United States is giving our working people the *Shabbath,* we require men to utilize the new leisure for legitimate Sabbath enjoyment. But this Jewish life will grow fruitfully only on the basis of full Jewish-consciousness.

In times of peril we should use every weapon, realizing, however, that they may help us, but not save us. Mass-meetings to arouse the public conscience are impressive, but they will not bring us salvation. The much vaunted Jewish racial intelligence is a total failure in warding off danger, in overcoming obstacles. We must go back for ultimate salvation to the Rock of Ages. We must stir up the "eagle's nest." We must teach our children to look upward, and to build up a new spirit of absolute trust in God. Thus says Hosea:

"Assyria will not help us. We shall not ride the high horse. Nor deify our personal achievements. Only in Thee does the orphan find mercy."

THE MESSAGE OF ISRAEL

Israel, the orphan of human history, finds strength and compassion in God alone.

We have no way out. Around us howl the wolves. Let us learn to look upward and to look beyond.

LITTLE MEN IN GREAT DAYS

by

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LITTLE MEN IN GREAT DAYS

by

ISRAEL HERBERT LEVINTHAL

There is a work by the great Russian author, Andreyev, the title of which is most suggestive—*Confessions of a Little Man During Great Days.* I find that title most significant for an analysis of the present world cataclysm. If I were asked to characterize the present age, with the tragic upheaval that has come upon all lands and all nations, I would say that we see before us Little Men in Great Days!

These are, indeed, great days. They may be uncomfortable days, but great days they are nevertheless. Today we can understand better than ever before the meaning of those striking words which we proclaim on Rosh Hashonah, after the sounding of the trumpet, "This day a world came into being!" Yea, a new world is today coming into being. "This day all mankind stands in judgment." Humanity is at the bar of justice while we face the birth of a new world.

GREAT DAYS, SMALL MEN

These are great days, but we who live in them are little men—little in our appreciation, in our understanding, in the wisdom we display, facing this new world.

We thought that we had great men. We always felt assured that if any trouble came we could be at ease—our great men would solve everything for us. What

became of our great men? They are little pygmies in this world crisis. To quote the late popular American humorist, Will Rogers, "Our financial giants failed to giant." Our financial, our political, our social, our philosophic giants, all of them failed to giant, they shrunk to their real stature. How true are the words of the English poet: "Pygmies are pygmies still, tho percht on Alps!"

Little men facing great days—that is the tragic picture of the age in which we find ourselves. The old system of life is being shaken to its very foundation. The economic structure is crashing; the political life of nations is threatened; the social standards are being challenged, yet no one seems to know why. And the remedies that are proposed are remedies of little minds, little men!

In Russia the old life has disappeared. The capitalistic system has been crushed. A new world has there been born! In Italy you see the reverse, democracy is crushed and the rule of the dictator is enthroned. Germany and England, for a while, were on the verge of bankruptcy. We sit here and say, "These things are happening three and four thousand miles away. Nothing like that can happen here, everything is all right with us." If science has taught us anything it is that this is a very small world. A word spoken here can now be heard in a moment in every corner of the globe. Men can circle the whole world in a few days. No nation can now seclude herself from the rest of the world. And a danger that threatens one

part of the world becomes a common danger for all mankind. You recall, no doubt, the Biblical tale of the flood. The people who lived in the lowlands and in the valleys were washed away at once by the waters of destruction. The people on the hill-tops felt at ease, the waters would surely not reach them. But the author of the tale adds, with the touch of an artist, that "the waters prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth," destroying those who but a short while ago felt so certain of their safety. And while these were perishing, those who dwelt on the mountain tops felt certain that the waters would never reach them. "But the water prevailed exceedingly and all the high mountains were covered," and these, too, were swept away by the onrushing waters. So, too, in our day. Everyone says, in the words of the psalmist, "Surely, when the waters overflow, they will not reach unto him!" But the waters are getting stronger and stronger, threatening the very foundations of our universe!

Men and women, I am not a diplomat nor a financier. I may not be able to grasp nor to explain the technical reasons for the breakdown of our civilization. And yet I believe that I can offer an analysis which we find in our ancient rabbinic literature and which does make clear what is happening before our eyes.

Please do not make the mistake in thinking that this cataclysm has come upon the world suddenly. Again and again we are told that this is but one of the perennial cycles of fortune and misfortune that visit us, that we have to expect a depression after a siege of pros-

perity. But this is not the ordinary financial depression. We are witnessing something more profound, more far-reaching in its consequences. It is the climax of an age-long struggle of ideas, the final round in the clash between two Weltanschauungen, two outlooks upon life.

CONTENDING PRINCIPLES

In a remarkable statement, an ancient Rabbi tells us: "If one should say to you that the peoples of the world possess *Chochmoh* (human) wisdom, believe him. But if one should say to you that they possess *Torah,* the divine wisdom, believe him not!" In this cryptic sentence you find an analysis that goes to the very root of the evils that have come upon the world. The world is witnessing a clash between *Chochmoh* and *Torah,* and the future of the world is dependent upon the outcome of this struggle. Both words in the original Hebrew mean wisdom, yet there is a tremendous difference between the two. *Chochmoh* is the wisdom of the mind, the wisdom that deals with things, it is the wisdom that is responsible for invention, discovery, all mechanistic progress. The world has this wisdom. This age is the symbol of it, it is the era in which *Chochmoh* reigns supreme. The human mind is overwhelmed at the remarkable progress achieved in the realm of *Chochmoh.* But Torah is something else, it is the wisdom of the heart, the wisdom that deals with human life, that treats of human relationship. Erecting a sky-scraper of a hundred stories is *Choch-*

moh; promoting the joy, the health, the welfare of those who come in contact with it is Torah. The trouble with the world is that it has enthroned *Chochmoh,* that it believed that civilization can be built upon a mechanistic theory alone. More mechanics, more inventions, more mass production—that is the solution, we were told; that will bring more gold into our coffers, and gold means happiness.

Torah was dethroned. People built, but crushed human souls in the process. In that old story of the building of the Tower of Babel our rabbis tell us that in the rush to build it higher and higher, if a man accidentally fell, no one took any notice of him—they rushed on with the work. But if a brick accidentally fell, the builders began to weep, moaning, "Oh, how long it will take us to bring up another in its place!" So, too, in our building of the towers of our material strength. Human lives were crushed in the process; who had time to give any notice to that? But in our rush we failed to take note that we were creating a Frankenstein for ourselves, that would wreak vengeance from us. *Torah* is a spiritual force that refuses to remain unheeded. The present cataclysm represents a determined attempt on the part of *Torah* to become an active power and effective influence in the lives of men. What we are witnessing now is the rebellion of the human soul against the enthronement of *Chochmoh*—it is the cry of humanity for *Torah,* for a new adjustment of our social order.

THE UPWARD TURN

The big little men are offering all sorts of remedies which bring no relief, but, somehow, they carefully avoid the only remedy that can bring healing to the ailment. There is a legend told us by our sages that when God was about to give the *Torah,* the moral law, on Mount Sinai, he first offered it to all the other nations besides the Israelites. Each of them first asked, "What does the Torah demand of us?" And when God told them "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not kill," each in turn refused to accept it. They turned their backs upon it. Many people to-day, too, refuse to accept it. But the *Torah* has been patient these thousands of years, confident that the day would come when the world would be forced to accept her. To-day *Torah* is coming into its own. "You will have to yield to me now, for without me your world will destroy itself!" When Israel accepted the divine Law on Sinai, our sages tell us that God said to them, "You are the friend of my world, for had you not accepted the Torah, I would have turned the world into the void and formlessness of the days before Creation!" If you want to grasp fully the significance of world events to-day, it is in this challenge of *Torah* to all the peoples of the earth: "Either you accept my rule now, or the world will go back to nothingness!" Yea, it is a struggle of thousands of years that is coming to a head in our day. It took centuries for *Torah* to come to its own—but that is the way of all spiritual truth, it makes head-

way slowly, gradually, but surely, until it reaches triumphantly its goal.

In the Biblical description of the scene at Sinai, when the Ten Commandments were uttered, we are told that the trumpet or ram's horn was sounded. "And the sound of the *Shofar* (trumpet) went forth and waxed louder and exceedingly louder." There is something uniquely significant about this statement. Usually the sound of the voice or of an instrument becomes weaker and less audible the further it travels. If I blew a trumpet here, the people sitting close to me would hear it well, but people standing a block away would hear it much weaker, and people two blocks away would hardly hear it at all. But of the trumpet sounded on Sinai the Hebrew text says that the sound went further, and the further it reached the stronger it became. That is the way of the voice of the spirit. It may be weak at first, but it grows stronger and stronger as it travels through the ages. The peoples of the earth shut their ears to the sound of the spirit that came from Sinai. But that voice kept going through the ages, becoming stronger and stronger, until, to-day, it must be heard by all.

When I speak of *Chochmoh* and *Torah,* as the underlying forces struggling for supremacy to-day, I do not mean to imply that there is an inherent conflict between *Torah* and every form of *Chochmoh;* between religion, as the exponent of Torah, and science, as the exponent of *Chochmoh;* between morality and the progress of mechanics and engineering. Commenting upon the

words of Job (28:12), "But wisdom, where shall it be found?" our sages tell us that King Solomon searched for the seat of wisdom—where was it indeed to be found, whether in the head or in the heart. Wise as he was, he came to the rightful conclusion that it was to be found in both, in the mind and in the heart. The protest of *Torah* is only against that type of *Chochmoh* which finds its seat in the mind alone and is entirely divorced from the human heart; its protest is against the *Chochmoh* that is based upon cleverness, trickery, Machiavelian tactics; that makes its goal world success for yourself, even if to attain it you must crush the lives of all in your path. In a remarkable tribute which our rabbinic literature pays to Moses, it says of him that he was "Master in *Chochmoh* and Master in *Torah*." When civilization becomes master of both these ideals, when it learns how to build upon this twofold foundation, then indeed will world salvation come.

As far as the world struggle is concerned, I am confident that eventually the ideal of *Torah* will triumph; that a new morality, a higher social order, a more humane economic philosophy will prevail, which will represent the happy synthesis of *Chochmoh* and *Torah*, which will be master in both spheres, and which, finding their source and their inspiration in the human heart as well as in the human mind, will usher in an era of untold happiness for all mankind!

KEHILLAH KEDOSHAH—
THE HOLY CONGREGATION

by

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KEHILLAH KEDOSHAH—THE HOLY CONGREGATION

by

LOUIS I. NEWMAN

Each year at Rosh ha-Shanah the congregations of Israel re-assemble from the four corners of the commonwealth. They gird themselves anew for the duties of synagogue and community life. They re-consecrate themselves to the holy cause for which, as congregations, they have been summoned into being. It is well for us to come under the mantle of religion, where the values of effort are measured by standards different from those of day-by-day existence. Our modern way of life leaves little room for the concept and practice of holiness. We are so concerned with the problems of livelihood, and, in our hours of leisure, with the problems of effective recreation, that we have thrust into the discard the classic interests of organized religion. Moreover, we have so departmentalized the minimum of religious activity among a few chosen spirits that is has ceased to be a constant and pervasive factor in our conduct.

The modern synagogue has attained to great apparent strength, but the beauty of the edifices which house it oftentimes masks its weakness as an institution. No congregation is greater than the individuals who comprise its membership, and oftentimes it can be blighted by a few persons who place the stamp of their own personality upon it. Many a potential group of men

and women, striving to create a fellowship of health and service, are frustrated by the presence and insistence of a minority, even as small as one or two people, who take the name of religion in vain by reason of their character deficiencies. Yet we must remember that no group of persons is ever perfect in complexion, and that it is a matter of religion to aid them in merit. Greater than perfection itself, we are told, is the hunger for it. And greater than the hunger, is the endeavor to attain it. Judaism has always spoken of the "Yoke of the Law" and the "Yoke of Heaven." In truth our faith is a harness wherewith to discipline our vital Oriental temperament. The very intensity of our emotions has made necessary a strict regimen of restraint.

The synagogue affords an instrument whereby this training in self-control can be decisively conveyed. Many Jews, particularly in the liberal Temples, are lords of their respective economic domain; they are little potentates in their business, mercantile or professional establishments; they grow accustomed to the issuance of commands which win obedience because they control the purse strings as employers. But when they come within the purview of the synagogue, they meet their peers of intellect, intuition and authority. If they remain in the institution at all, they soon find it necessary to learn the art of friendly cooperation and good-will. It has been said that "temperament is only another name for bad temper." No person with "temperament" or "bad temper" can en-

dure as a synagogue leader without a basic change of manners, if not of personality. Synagogue affiliation for the most part is voluntary, and oftentimes the most paltry excuse is seized upon by the lukewarm adherent to sever his association with the Temple. Hence a working basis of agreement between the trustees and members of the institution must be developed whereby their contacts become tolerable. The Karliner Zaddik once declared: "The entire progress of mankind depends upon loyal cooperation. If quarrels are absent from a company of men, no evil can overtake them." It is good for high-spirited, dictatorial Jews to participate in the religious institution, where they must share responsibility with others. They lose much of their acerbity; they grow less prone to speak harsh and insensitive words regarding their neighbors; they submerge their own selfish whims in the common good. Thus they take the first essential step towards the holiness of character which the ministrations of religion ought to cultivate among them. Said Rabbi Bunam: "The Talmud teaches us to walk into the synagogue the width of two entrances in order that we may pray; not to stand near the door. This means that we should first open our heart in order that the spirit of worldliness may make its exit; then we must open our heart again to give entrance to the spirit of holiness. After this, we may pray properly."

Through attachment to a "Kehillah Kedoshah," the individual Jew learns not only self-restraint in his dealings with his fellows, but self-sacrifice as well on

behalf of the people and faith of Israel. Too often the rank and file of our contemporary synagogues are little concerned with the fundamental ideals of Judaism to which as Jews they should devote themselves. Many members of Temples are not merely uninformed regarding the precepts and traditions of Israel, regarding the content of Jewish experience and the nature of Jewish movements; many of them are actually open and pronounced adversaries of Jewish values. It is not sufficient for young Jews to assemble in their societies and leagues merely as racialists, unconsciously on the hunt for a mate in the Jewish clan, or consciously aware that they are genuinely at ease among fellow-Jews. Synagogue organizations should be dedicated to the weal of the Jewish people and the advancement of the Jewish faith. The currents of Jewish activity should run freely through every group allied with the synagogue, and the program of specific activities for its members should be linked to religious and communal tasks. Merely to dance or present plays in a Jewish environment is inadequate. This may be agreeable to the so-called secular Jewish Center or Y. M. and Y. W. H. A., but is not in keeping with the central aspirations of the modern synagogue. It is better to have a small group consecrated in understanding and appreciation to the pristine ideals of Judaism, than a large, amorphous conglomeration of individuals seeking the lowest common denominator of synagogue interest. Unless the religious institution can illumine and sanctify the life of each individual within the

range of its influence, it were better to dissolve and close its doors. The Temple should be a laboratory for new enterprises in Jewish religious activity; it should be a training school for Jewish leadership; it should be the hearth and shrine for the cultivation of a Jewish outlook upon life among its adherents. Too often have the laity degraded the function of the synagogue by failing to preserve the high standards of which the pulpit should be the custodian and the spokesman. It is told that the Besht was about to enter a synagogue, but he halted at the door and exclaimed: "This place is overfilled with prayers and learning!"

"Why, then, do you hesitate to enter such a holy place?" inquired his Disciples.

"Were this a truly sacred place," replied the Besht, "the prayers and learning would have ascended heavenward, and this synagogue would be empty of them. Only the prayer and learning which does not come from the heart can fill an earthly abode."

The synagogue should be a place not only for instruction in proper prayer, but also in proper patriotism for Israel. No Jew should be too humble to be regarded by synagogue Jews as their brother. No Jewish cause should be too distant in origin to capture the allegiance of every religious-minded Jew. Those synagogues which are hotbeds of social discrimination are treasonable to the spirit of Judaism. If they shut the door in the face of Jews of recent immigrant origin, or, accepting them on the membership roster, nevertheless fail to make place for them in the ranks of synagogue

leadership, once more are they false to the purpose whereunto they were created. Then in truth will a sincere Zaddik feel himself a stranger in such an alleged "House of God." "My House shall be called a House of Prayer for all peoples" is a prophetic phrase which applies to Jews of varying national origins as much as to non-Jews of other faiths.

It is in the "Holy Congregation" that the synagogue Jew can learn the message of charity. Modern Judaism has bred a type of Jew who imagines that because he belongs to a "Shuhl" he has fulfilled his entire Jewish duty. Moreover, there are multitudes of Jews who give the barest minimum when called upon to contribute. We find also the Jewish leader who believes that because he gives service to the lay guidance of the Temple, he is freed from obligation to Jewish philanthropies. This lay helpfulness is deeply appreciated to be sure, but with the burdens of office go also the privileges and honors. Very few members of the laity are prepared to surrender the prestige of synagogue office when once it has been conferred upon them. For whatever the failure of the organized Temple to measure up to the high expectations regarding it, it remains, nevertheless, the chief Jewish organization, most representative of the Jewish community among the non-Jews. There is an aura that doth hedge the lay officials of a synagogue, superior even to the glamour touching the officers of a Federation of Jewish Charities.

Noblesse oblige! The more conspicuous the post, the heavier the responsibilities! The leaders of synagogues should be men and women of sanctified life, generous, great-hearted, far-sighted, broad-gauged folk, who consider no task too onerous, and no sacrifice too taxing. The author of "Tefillah le-Moshe" says: "If God has granted you the privilege of being a leader in Israel, do not rebuke your people with an angry heart, but with a soft tongue. For Israel is a holy congregation, blessed of the Lord. Let every man be important in your eyes, and not inconsequential. For you cannot know who is worthy and who unworthy. Man often looks upon a fellowman as despicable and worthless, but God looks into the very heart." The synagogue leader must set the example for his associates; he must not only point out the way, but walk in it himself. If he is niggardly of spirit, the laity of the institution will likewise be ungenerous and small-grained. If he is ill-tempered and splenetic, he will create a neurosis among the persons whom he influences. If he judges, not "le-kaph Zekuth," on the side of merit, but on the side of disdain and arrogance, he will belittle his companions and bely the spirit of the religious institution, of which he is a trusted guide and pilot. The same is true in equal degree of the laity who fill the pews of the sanctuary. They create the atmosphere and group morale of the organization, and together they can encourage or obstruct the endeavors of those who aspire to ever-improved standards of achievement. It is their reaction upon each other which establishes

the mood in which the altruistic work of the synagogue is to be done. Too often the laity in religious institutions are persons addicted to the vices of virtuous people—namely, negative reactions, a sense of superiority, a tendency to be hypocritical, and an unreadiness to be kindly and sympathetic in their judgements. The effect of religious activity and interest should be to make us all more humane, and to improve rather than impair the art of human relations.

The Kaminker tells the following story: "Once I resolved to devote a whole day to the recitation of the entire Book of Psalms. When towards evening, I was approaching the end, the Warden of my Rabbi, the Tzidnover Maggid, came over to me, and said that the Maggid wished to speak with me. I requested him to inform the Rabbi that I would see him as soon as I had finished. But the Warden returned and bade me come immediately. The Maggid asked me: 'Why did you not obey my first summons?' I explained the reason. The Maggid replied: 'I called you to make a collection for an indigent Jew. Psalms can be chanted by the Angels as well, but mortal men are needed to aid the destitute. Charity is a greater duty than the chanting of Psalms, inasmuch as the Angels cannot perform charity.'"

In this spirit must religious-minded men and women approach the task of making concrete their resolution to lead the life of holiness. "Before the recital of prayers," said the Bratzlaver, "a man should give to charity. Thus will he avoid alien thoughts." "On Rosh

ha-Shanah it is decreed how much a man shall lose throughout the year. If he is sensible, he will take this loss in the form of gifts to charity." "Give charity with both hands, and your prayers will be heard." "Charity is of great use on the Judgement Day." In the mood of these injunctions we must act upon the maxim: *"Lo ha-midrash h-ikkar, elah ha-maaseh,"* "not the theory, but the deed is fundamental." The leaders and laity of the synagogue must be in the forefront of all good works in the community; they must bend every effort to the enhancement of those enterprises by which the needy are rescued from want, the oppressed from the tyrant's lash, and the strong builders of Israel's future are fortified in their labors. Thus will they be fulfilling their destiny as members of the Holy Congregation."

The synagogue Jew ought gain from his attachment to the institutions of faith a recognition of his true place in society and in the universe, thereby achieving the perspective which alone can preserve us from unwarranted pride. "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?" asks the Psalmist. Yet we have been fashioned "but little lower than the Angels," and it behooves us to lead our life according to the celestial image. Said the Sudilkover: "Every human action sends a ray of the spirit into the realm of divinity like a stream of running water. When the channel is clean, the water running through it is pure. Likewise, if a man's action is worthy, its spiritual influence makes for holiness. Let us beware lest we send up rays of out

impurity." The religious consciousness is by no means alert among modern-minded persons, and it is essential that they gain a portion of it through their contact with the classic traditions of belief. We are so accustomed to pitch our daily conduct upon a lowly level that we distrust the visionary and idealistic. The synagogue ought be an island of quiet amid the turmoil of contemporary living. It ought be a "safe refuge" for meditation in solitude. The world with its anxieties and trivialities should drop away when we enter the sanctuary. There alone can we gather into our being the moral energy wherewith to confront the complex issues of our times.

Religion should so transform us that, without false piety, we can be genuinely consecrated afresh to the tasks before us. We should carry this new-found character into the haunts of practical affairs: whether in business, or the professions or in common-place activity, we should never step out of the personality we achieve within the synagogue. Said the Apter: "Holiness has the effect of awakening holiness. It cultivates the better nature of those who observe it. We learn that when the artists who wrought the holy objects for the Tabernacle reported a surplus of materials, Moses did not ordain that no more materials should be brought, but that no more work should be done. This was because the people, aroused to a sense of holiness and dedication, could not be restrained from bringing gifts as long as a holy work was being performed." Let us extend this zeal to works outside the domain of the

Temple, and because of the illumination we bring them, lend to them the touch of holiness. We have reared mighty edifices, panoplied with all the trappings of physical grandeur; we have assembled great throngs to witness their devotion to the purposes of religion. Then we have seen them deserted and forsaken of men, except on a few occasions a year. And worse still, we have seen the structure become the substitute for the message, and the building a vicarious instrument of righteousness. It is time that we centered our attention upon ourselves, the professed worshippers, and examined our being in the light of the heritage we seek to expound. We have built the home wherein the Shekinah can abide; it is now our duty to build the "Kehillah Kedoshah," the "Holy Congregation" which shall be worthy of the Indwelling Presence of the Lord.

KOL NIDRE

All vows, bonds, devotions, promises, obligations, penalties and oaths: wherewith we have vowed, sworn, devoted and bound ourselves: from this Day of Atonement unto the next Day of Atonement, may it come unto us for good: lo, all these, we repent us in them.

Opening Traditional Prayer
Kol Nidre Night

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KOL NIDRE

by

SAMUEL S. COHON

It was an awe-inspiring moment in the old synagogue, when, at the beginning of the service of the eve of the Day of Atonement, a number of respected members of the community opened the Ark, and taking Sefer Torahs in their hands placed themselves beside the cantor as he opened the devotions of the holiest day of the year with the chant of the Kol Nidre. Because of the solemnity of the occasion the whole evening service received the name Kol Nidre. The plaintive melody is one of the richest gems in the Jewish treasure of sacred song. It never fails to thrill the hearts of men and women. Rendered by a virtuoso on the violin, cello, piano or organ, or intoned by a humble cantor, played by a symphony orchestra or sung by a Temple choir, it stirs the heart strings of the people and makes them vibrate with holy resolves. Its sighing and sobbing tones call forth the thought of our weakness and frailty. Its gradual rise to high, bold and triumphant strains rouses the spirit to gather faith, to shatter the shackles of doubt and skepticism, to burst through the dungeon-darkness on to the light of God, to freedom. Every tone is a prayer, every phrase a call to praise the living God. This is not ordinary music. It is the cry of a people's soul, piercing the clouds of fear and of anguish and sanctifying all earthly thoughts in prayer.

The Kol Nidre itself can hardly be considered a prayer. It was written more than a thousand years ago in the Aramaic dialect of the Jewish academies of Babylonia as a formula of absolution of vows. It is set in a framework of an introductory Hebrew formula and a concluding Biblical verse. In its original form, the Kol Nidre aimed to annul the unfulfilled vows and obligations that were made in the course of the past year. In the revised form, as used in German and Russo-Polish congregations, the words of the Kol Nidre refer to vows that may be made in the course of the coming year. It reads: "All vows, obligations, anathemas . . . and oaths, which we may vow, assume or swear and whereby we may bind ourselves from this Day of Atonement even until the next—of all of them we hereby repent; they shall not be binding nor have power over us . . . our vows shall not be reckoned vows; our obligations shall not be obligations; and our oaths shall not be oaths."

Upon its first appearance, the heads of the Babylonian academies attacked the Kol Nidre as unworthy of a place in the Jewish service. Rav Amram Gaon, who drew up the first synagogue ritual, denounced its recitation as a foolish custom—*minhag shtus;* and Rav Hai Gaon warned congregations against its use. Despite these protests of leading Jewish scholars, the custom spread to commence the Erev Yom Kippur service with the Kol Nidre. The touching melody, with its wide popular appeal, saved the words for many a modern congregation.

The protests against the use of this formula of absolution were prompted by grave concern for the welfare of the Jewish people. Unscrupulous men with elastic consciences, used it as a means of escaping their obligations and oaths. Jew haters, taking advantage of the lapses of individual Jews, accused the whole Jewish people of being unreliable and untrustworthy. Pointing to the Kol Nidre, they argued that the Jew does not intend to keep his promises, his pledges, and his oaths. On this and similarly flimsy grounds, they succeeded in having the legislators of several countries administer a special oath to Jews, known as More Judaica. This insulting oath was abolished in European countries only within comparatively recent times.

In consequence of the facts that the Kol Nidre entered the synagogue under protest and that grave misunderstandings were caused by it, misunderstandings endangering the welfare of our people, the Reform rabbis in conference held at Brunswick in 1844 resolved unanimously that this formula is not essential to Jewish worship and that for the good of Judaism it should be abolished. In our Reform synagogue we therefore retain the inspiring music of the Kol Nidre but replace the old Aramaic formula of absolution of vows with a hymn or prayer expressive of the spirit of this holy day.

Examined in the right light, the quaint formula itself appears to have sprung from a pure spiritual motive. It was never intended to free man of his obligations toward his fellowmen, but rather to absolve

him of rash promises that affected his own conscience and his personal relation to God. This sentiment was in harmony with the teaching of the Rabbis that sins committed against God may be atoned through prayer and a turn of heart or repentance on Yom Kippur, but not sins committed against one's fellowmen. These cannot be forgiven until the offended parties have been duly appeased. We all know how easy it is to make promises and how difficult it is to fulfill them. Under the impulse of the moment we assume obligations of all sorts, which we do not seriously endeavor to discharge. We readily promise our aid to philanthropic and communal matters, we respond to drives of religious or patriotic nature, we sign all pledges and then forget all about it, or proceed to the practice of what has come to be known as "chiselling." To check this tendency in the hearts of men, the Bible teaches: "*Motso sfosecho shmor*—That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt observe and do; according as thou hast vowed freely unto the Lord thy God, even that which thou hast promised with thy mouth." (Dt. 23, 24). It is better not to vow at all than to make vows and to break them—is the counsel of the ancient sage. Nevertheless with all the caution that a person may exercise, he runs the danger of leaving many resolutions unfulfilled. Men of honor feel their weight. To free them from the burden of a guilty conscience, the Kol Nidre was devised that entering upon the holiest day of the year, the worshippers may retract in the presence of God any personal vow or oath that they made or will

make thoughtlessly, and penitently pray for God's pardon.

This underlying motive of the Kol Nidre to offer men an opportunity for reconcilation with God is significant for all of us at this sacred hour. Peculiarly fitting for us are the sentiments expressed in the introductory sentence of the Kol Nidre: "In the heavenly and in the earthly tribunal, by the permission of God and of the congregation, we hold it lawful to pray with the transgressors." These words were intended for all who broke faith with their God and people, and applied with special force to those who in ages past, were driven by Mohammedan or Christian intolerance to join the Mosque or Church. In Catholic Spain and Portugal these "forced converts," known by the name Anusim or Marranos, played a tragic role in the heroic drama of Jewish suffering. Outwardly they were compelled to act as Christians. whereas at heart many of them remained Jews and at the right opportunity rejoined their faith. At the risk of being burned alive or of being cast into the dungeons of the Inquisition, they secretly observed the practices of Judaism. On the Day of Atonement some of them would venture to join their brethren in worship at the Synagogue. The words: "We hold it lawful to pray with the transgressors" came to them as words of welcome into the Jewish fellowship of faith.

"A History of the Marranos," from the pen of Cecil Roth, was recently issued by the Jewish Publication

Society (1932). There we may read the amazing story of this tragic group of Jews. The author traces their submerged life "which blossomed out at intervals into such exotic flowers; the unique devotion which could transmit the ancestral ideals unsullied, from generation to generation, despite the Inquisition and its horrors; the figures of rare heroism which every now and again emerged to burst upon the world." He concludes with the extraordinary climax which this unparalleled movement in history has reached in our days through the labors of the striking figure of Captain Arthur Carlos de Barros Basto. Fired with love for Judaism, he zealously devoted himself to overcoming the timorousness, the ignorance and the secretiveness of his fellow Marranos and to lead them back openly to the faith which their fathers were forced to abandon centuries ago. His zeal has roused numerous Marranos to open allegiance to Judaism. In a letter to the rabbinate of Jerusalem, asking for sanction to espouse Judaism, they wrote (1925):

> "The baptism of our forbears was only pretended because of the terror of the Inquisition and the Auto-da-fe. In the depths of our hearts, however, we, their descendants, have maintained our love and our loyalty to our Jewish people. We marry only among ourselves and even if we are baptised as children in Catholic churches, are married according to Catholic rites, and are laid in our graves as Catholics, we feel ourselves Jews more than ever. In the course of the centuries we have lived under the pressure of clericalism, cut off from every communication with Jews. The Jewish laws have become strange to us. By certain phases of the moon we know

when it is Yom Kippur, which we observe devoutly according to the commands which have been handed down by tradition. It pains us that we do not understand the words of these Hebrew commands. We Marranos never cease to speak of our return to Jerusalem. We speak of it with our children and we believe in it firmly. We take the most joyful interest in the present reconstruction work of our Jewish brethren in the land of our fathers.

The spirit of liberty for all peoples and nations which is now passing through the world (the letter continues), the breaking of the old chains by modern civilization has led the leading personalities among the Marranos to believe that there is no longer any reason why they should continue to hide their feelings and thoughts under a mask. The spirit of toleration and modern culture is dominant today in Portugal, and the Marranos wish to avow themselves openly as sons of the ancient Jewish people, to which they have never ceased to belong with heart and soul. Many of us have already applied to the Jewish community in Lisbon, which, however, for political reasons, has been reserved with regard to our desire to return to Judaism. The term "Marranos" we feel describes a condition of hypocritical make-belief and cowardly insincerity. We wish to participate openly and honestly in the lot of our people throughout the world, for we belong to it by blood, race and spiritual life."

(London Jewish Chronicle)

Since then a synagogue was dedicated at Oporto (July 1, 1927) bearing the significant name "Mekor Haim—fountain of life." Attached to it is a seminary for the training of boys who might spread the message of Judaism among their kinsfolk in remoter centers. Open Jewish communities, sanctioned by law, have been established in several cities and a number of pro-

visional centers in smaller places. "Now," writes Roth, "throughout northern Portugal, services are held at regular intervals, in increasingly close fidelity to the traditional Jewish forms, and attended by congregations numbering up to one hundred souls." They have received the sympathetic welcome of the Jewish people, for "we hold it lawful to pray with transgressors."

What a marvelous lesson the story of the Marranos holds out to us. It is said that history repeats itself. This is true only in a limited sense. Things do not repeat themselves in exactly the same manner, but they often assume a strikingly similar character. The condition that produced the Marranos in Spain and in Portugal five centuries ago has reappeared, though in modified form, in many lands within our own times.

The Marranos are not confined to the victims of Catholic intolerance. At this very time there are "Anusim" or forced converts in other lands as well. Though more than eighteen years have passed since the downfall of the Czars, Russia still presents a land of coercion and tyranny. The red czars have proved to be no less despotic than the black. Freedom is enjoyed only by the communists. Others must conform to their opinions and convictions not only in political and economic matters but also in affairs of conscience and of religion. As communism has waged war on all religions and has set itself up as their substitute, Russian Jews and Christians are driven to martyrdom. True, the official laws of the country do not openly

prohibit worship, but the pressure of the governing party has made life unbearable for religious folk. Many of them are forced to follow the Marranos of Spain and Portugal and pursue their religious life in secret. Considerable numbers of Jewish young people have fallen in line with the anti-religious activities of the communistic party. Some of them outdo their non-Jewish comrades in the zeal with which they fight Judaism as well as all other religions, hoping thereby to free Russia from the poison of racial and religious prejudice. In the name of progress and enlightenment, they violate the elementary rights of conscience, which are carefully preserved in all civilized lands. Despite their attacks and jeers, hundreds of thousands of Jews in Soviet Russia will assemble this very night in the synagogues that are still left to take part in the Kol Nidre service. Vital faith is not easily extirpated by force. History will tell whether the religious spirit can be destroyed in a people that has produced a Dostoyevski and a Tolstoy, and whether the religious loyalty of Russian Jewry can be eradicated by radicalism and by tyranny.

Above all it is in Germany, this year, that numbers of Marranos will rejoin their brethren in the Kol Nidre service of atonement. For over a century the assimilation movement has been proceeding apace. Jews, whose faith had cooled, gladly baptized themselves in order to escape their Jewish disabilities. While some of them may have been in earnest, the majority of converts to Christianity did not take their

conversion seriously. In only one thing they were in dead earnest. They craved to become known as a hundred per cent Teutons. Some of them even became bitter anti-Semites. Conversion, intermarriage, complete assimilation—these appeared the ways of escape from prejudice. But like the Marranos of Spain and Portugal they have come to sad disillusionment and to grief. By their action they only fanned the flames of bigotry. Much of the anti-Semitic movement in Germany has been directed against the assimilated Jews. Indeed the hostility of the Nazis has been even more intense against them. A "German-Christian" (Professor Gerhard Kittel), in a pamphlet on the Jewish Question, argues that not the observant Jews but the assimilated ones, the converts and the free-thinkers present the greatest danger to German racial and cultural purity. Whatever we may think of the specious racial theories of the Nazis, their hand has fallen more heavily upon the de-Judaized than upon the faithful Jews. They do not even have the consolation of suffering for their Jewishness. All Jewish feeling and conviction had been washed out of their consciousness. Even those who had but one Jewish grandparent are driven from every sphere of German life. The church itself has been forced to disown them. In their distress considerable numbers have asked to be readmitted to the Jewish community not only for economic relief but also for spiritual fellowship. Tonight many of them will join with the rest of the house of Israel in the service of repentance and atonement.

The Marranos are plentiful in our own country as well. No law or public pressure has driven them away from their faith and people. Despite the petty discrimination of the thoughtless, they have not been really compelled to mask their Jewishness. Indeed their evasion of their Jewish connections and their posing as being something other than what they are often evokes the contempt of thoughtful non-Jews. Though they deny their origin and parade their non-Jewishness, their cowardice comes out sooner or later. Though they run to the ends of the earth, they cannot disguise their identity. When the fires of anti-Semitism blaze forth, they are frequently the first to burn. Their disloyalty to the Jewish people and faith brands them as men that cannot be trusted.

However, if on meeting with hostility, they are sobered and discover that it is more honorable to suffer with their own than to seek safety under a mask, they find the doors of the Synagogue open. "We hold it lawful to pray with the transgressors." We pass over the insult which they have dealt us. We sympathize with their frailty of spirit and receive them as brothers. On this night vast numbers of such men and women will again knock at the doors of our Synagogues in all parts of the world. And they shall be welcomed in the hope that they return in sincerity and in reverence for our faith, ready to assume their obligations as Jews.

But even within the synagogue there are those who, though officially connected with our religious life and with our people, have inflicted deep wounds upon the

Jewish body. Like the unscrupulous men of old, who through the violation of their oaths, brought discredit upon all Jews, so there are in our midst, in stations high and low, men and women who have hurt, through their public and private conduct, the honor of the Jewish people. Devoid of public spirit some of them exploit every possible occasion for selfish ends. Others, without regard for public opinion lead lives that disgrace the name Jew. Their offences are not charged to themselves alone but rather to the whole Jewish community.

On Yom Kippur we are not called to sit in judgment upon the sins of others, but rather to prove our own hearts. Many of us, whose transgressions have not involved us in public disgrace, might well ponder the secret vices and passions which hold us captive. As the sage has observed there is no person entirely free from sin. Even those whose integrity is never questioned may harbor many a dark secret in their hearts. Judaism does not summon our people to public confessional. It considers it sufficient that "every man knoweth the plague of his own heart." Recognizing our own failings, we may grow more tolerant and forgiving of the failings of our fellowmen.

The call of the Kol Nidre reaches all hearts. All of us have made vows and assumed obligations, which are either broken or unfulfilled. Many a pledge is still unredeemed; many a promise not carried out; many a duty undischarged; many an ideal unrealized. From the depth of our hearts comes the expression of sorrow

and regret. *Kulhon ichratno behon.* And in humility and contrition we pray in the words of the concluding formula of the Kol Nidre: "May forgiveness be granted unto all the congregation of Israel and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for all the people have sinned unwittingly."

Wrestling with our consciences, the Divine promise comes to us: *"Solahti Kidvorecho*—I have pardoned according to your word." Prayer and repentance bring their own assuring reply. If we earnestly seek forgiveness for our broken vows and for our careless, thoughtless, blundering ways, then we must retrace our steps and plan our lives anew. Our atonement assumes reality when we return to our true selves, to our God and to our people, when we dispel gloom from a brother's heart, when we restore the broken bands of love and friendship. Life's vistas open to us anew. And we gather new strength from Yom Kippur's sacred call:

"Courage heart! Rise from the dust!
Heavenward lift thine eyes in trust!
Lo! thy gracious Lord
Speaks the saving word
Of reconciliation."

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KOL NIDRE

by

BERNARD DRACHMAN

כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם מכל חטאותיכם
לפני ה' תטהרו

"For on this day He shall atone for you, to cleanse you from all your sins, before the Lord ye shall be pure."
(Leviticus XVI, 30.)

We stand tonight at the threshold of the sublimest of religious days. Everywhere on earth the faithful of Israel are assembled in their houses of worship and until sunset tomorrow will pour out their souls in humble supplication to the all-merciful Father in Heaven that He may accept their repentance, their fasting and their self-affliction and grant them pardon for their iniquity. We all feel that Yom Kippur is a day of the profoundest spiritual significance and importance. But not all of us comprehend fully what it is that gives this day of days its great significance and importance. We all understand, of course, that its primary purpose is to readjust our spiritual balance, to bring forgiveness to those who sincerely repent and make amends to their neighbor for whatever wrong they may have committed against him. But not all of us realize that this purpose, fundamental though it be, does not express the whole meaning and intent of Atonement Day. It conveys a broader message and one, I may venture to

say, which appeals with greater force to the modern mind.

Interpreting in modern terms the significance of this day, it is a wonderful and most emphatic protest against the materialistic concept of life. The battle between the spiritual and the materialistic concepts of human life is not a new one. In ancient Israel there were those who said ומותר האדם מן הבהמה אין "Man hath no preeminence over the beast" and, on the other hand, those who proclaimed with firm faith

אכן רוח היא באנוש ונשמת שדי תבינם

"Truly there is a spirit in man and it is the breath of the Almighty which giveth them understanding." Never did the conflict rage as fiercely as it does today, never before were the forces of materialism so confident and insistent. But the victory is not necessarily theirs.

Judaism stands firmly for the spiritual concept of man and the Day of Atonement is our great proclamation of faith. Everything about Yom Kippur challenges and defies the merely physical. Today the loyal Jew neither eats nor drinks nor indulges in any bodily gratification; he is more like an angel of God than a mere creature of earth. The Midrash expresses this thought in its customary quaint and picturesque manner.

מנין השטן ש׳מ׳ד, מלמד שכל ימות השנה יש רשות להשטין על ישראל חוץ מיום הכפורים, אמר הק״ב״ה לשטן לך וראה במה ישראל עסוקים ביום הזה, הלך ומצאם בתענית ובתפלה לבושים בבגדים לבנים ודומים למלאכי השרת, מיד

חזר בבושה ובכלימה, אמר לו הק"ב"ה מה מצאת בבני ? אמר לו, הרי הם כמלאכי השרת ואיני יכול ליגע בהם : מיד הק"ב"ה כובלו ומבשר להם סלחתי.

"The numeral value of the word 'Ha-Satan' (Satan, the Accuser) is three hundred and sixty-four. This teaches us that on three hundred and sixty-four days of the year Satan can accuse Israel but that on one day, the Day of Atonement, there is no accusation that he can make against them. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Satan on the Day of Atonement, 'go and see what Israel is doing on this day.' He went and found them fasting and praying, robed in white and resembling the attendant angels. At once he returned in shame and disappointment. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said, 'What didst thou find in my children?' Satan answered, 'They are like angels and I cannot touch them!' At once The Holy One, Blessed be He, fettered him and proclaimed to Israel, "I have pardoned!'" How beautifully and strikingly does this quaint parable picture for us the sublime spirituality of this most holy of days.

As long as Israel preserves these lofty spiritual qualities, as long as the sentiments and aspirations of Atonement Day pervade its soul, so long will it be true to its sacred self and defy all the Satanic forces of materialism, will it deserve to be called God's people, "A kingdom of priests and a holy nation" and will be able to fulfill the mission assigned to the posterity of Abraham to be a blessing unto all the families of earth.

But here we must ask ourselves frankly and sin-

rely, "Are we worthy of these high encomiums, do
odern Jews measure up to the ideal standards of
irituality and ethical purity so impressively set by
e Day of Atonement?" And here we must, in all
mility, confess that many of our people have fallen
below these sublime ideals, that many are material-
ic and lustful only for the pleasures and profits of
e world, that many, especially of the younger element,
tertain perverted and corrupt notions of the mean-
g of life, far removed from the pure and holy con-
pts taught by Judaism and that many, who think
emselves pious and devout, observe the Day of
onement and the precepts of the Torah generally, as
ere mechanical and formal practices and without any
mprehension of their profound spiritual and ethical
nificance. To many of our brethren the scathing
rds of Isaiah apply so strikingly that they almost
pear to have been uttered in reference to modern
nditions.

הכזה יהיה צום אבחרהו יום ענות אדם נפשו הלכף כאגו
ראשו ושק ואפר יציע הלזה תקרא צום ויום רצון לה': ה
פרום לרעב לחמך ועניים מרודים תביא בית כי תראה עו
וכסיתו ומבשרך לא תתעלם.

s like this the fast which I choose; a day that a man
all merely afflict his soul that he shall bow his head
e a bulrush and put on sackcloth and ashes. Dost
ou call this a fast and an acceptable day unto the
rd? Is it not rather that thou shalt break unto the
ngry thy bread and bring the homeless poor into thy
use; that when thou seest the naked thou shalt cover

him and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh."

But despite the undeniable failings and shortcomings of modern Israel, which we may in large measure attribute to the sufferings and the evil influence of the sad and bitter exile, there is still a wealth of spirituality in our midst. The Jewish people is still essentially and predominantly a religious people; Judaism is still the faith of the overwhelming bulk of the descendants of the Patriarchs and millions still cling with fervor to Israel's wondrous heritage and fulfill with loyal devotion its sacred precepts. This great Day of Atonement is our annual pledge of unswerving fidelity. Let us, therefore, listen attentively and receptively to its message, the message of pure and genuine Judaism, of exalted spirituality and morality; let us permit that message to sink deeply into our hearts and shape our lives and our actions in accordance with its supremely wise, just and loving injunctions. Then will we be truly worthy to be members of God's holy people and by the example of our lives and proclamation of His Divine truth to bring spiritual and ethical uplifting, brotherhood and peace, happiness and blessing to all the world.

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"ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE HOLY OF HOLIES"

by

SIMON GREENBERG

The Talmud in one of its Tractates preserves for us a very detailed description of the impressive ceremonies enacted on Yom Kippur at the Temple in Jerusalem. In preparation for this Sabbath of Sabbaths the High Priest spent the preceding week within the hallowed Temple area. He received instructions regarding every detail of that day's arduous and involved ritual from the Rabbis and the elder Priests, and prepared himself spiritually and mentally for his sacred duties. The climax of the service was reached when about midday the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies, there to burn the incense and to offer prayer. Nor did anyone accompany him, or even witness from afar the performance of this most sacred rite. The eve and the night of Yom Kippur were spent by him in holy vigil. In the company of other priests of the Temple, the hours were occupied in study and meditation. Thus does the Mishna describe his activities during that night

אם היה חכם דורש, ואם לאו היו ת"ח דורשים לפניו. אם רגיל לקרות קורא, ואם לאו קוראים לפניו. ובמה קורין לפניו — באיוב, בעזרא ובדברי הימים . . . ובדניאל.

> "If he was a learned priest, he expounded the law —if not, others expounded it to him. If he knew how to read from the Bible, he read, if not others read to him. From what books of the Bible did

they read? From Job, from Ezra and from Chronicles, and at times also from the Book of Daniel."

Practically all the other parts of the Yom Kippur ritual were fixed for the High Priest by a tradition that had come down in Israel from time immemorial. In regard to them, the chief concern of the Rabbis and elder Priests was to make sure that the High Priest would not deviate one iota from the established usage. But the choice of books for study and meditation during the night of Yom Kippur was a comparatively late innovation made by the Rabbis. It does seen strange, therefore, that of all the books of the Bible these four should have been preferred. Why were the Books of Psalms, or the Pentateuch, passages from the Prophets or Proverbs overlooked? Nor can we ascribe the action of the Rabbis to mere whim or chance. The Day of Atonement was far too sacred a day for them to permit themselves to be guided by mere whim in making a decision regarding the least significant detail of its proper observance. Nowhere do the Rabbis explicitly state the reasons for this particular custom, but there can be little doubt that some deep-lying subconscious, historic, legal or psychological forces determined their choice. And if tonight we will attempt to discover these deep-lying subconscious forces, it is because we believe that it will be a spiritually beneficial experience for us.

Two factors must be taken into consideration if we are to penetrate to the hidden intuitive sense for the

appropriate, that guided the Rabbis in their choice of Biblical books suitable for the Yom Kippur Eve meditations of the High Priest. The first is the historical situation, the second, the contents of the books themselves.

Beginning with that fateful day of the year 333 B. C. E. when Alexander the Great led his conquering hosts into Palestine and colonized parts of the country with Greek settlers, and continuing to the day when the Temple was destroyed by the Romans some four hundred years later, it was no unusual phenomenon to have the High Priesthood occupied by men unworthy of the office. For the Greeks had brought with them their gymnasiums and public-baths, their skeptic philosophies and pagan religions, their rather lax morals and worship of physical beauty. This new world outlook and manner of life had much in it that was attractive and alluring. But in addition to the inherent attractiveness of the new culture, some of the Syro-Greek rulers were obsessed with the idea of "civilizing" the Jews. They either lacked the patience to wait until the Jews would themselves recognize the "superiority" of Greek culture, or else lacked the faith that such recognition would ever be given freely and universally. Hence a series of attempts were made to foist the Hellenistic civilization by force upon the politically subservient Jewish community. Under the double pressure of the innate appeal of Hellenism and the violent governmental persecutions, the Jews were divided into many groups and parties. There were

those who favored a policy of assimilation even before the persecutions set in, because they preferred the Greek to the Jewish way of life. Others had lost their religious faith by contact with Greek philosophy. Still others, though maintaining a love for their own faith and civilization, were overcome with despair when contrasting the political splendor of the various world empires with the military and political insignificance of the Jewish people. Hence assimilatory tendencies, religious doubts and national defeatism infected all ranks of the people. In the political chaos and social disorganization of the century preceding the final destruction of the Temple unscrupulous individuals who in practice and in theory believed in the policy of assimilation, would at times by the free use of bribery and violence seize for themselves the exalted office of the High Priesthood.

In the midst of this confusion the Rabbis continued to bend all of their efforts towards the preservation of the purity of their faith, and the courage of their people.

It is in the light of this historic situation and the heroic exertions of the Rabbis, that the reading of the Books of Job, Ezra, Daniel and Chronicles on the Eve of Yom Kippur takes on meaning and significance.

For what is it that these books contain?

The Book of Job devotes itself to the central, the pivotal question of all religious faith,—Is there a God of justice governing the world, or not? All the doubts and questionings of the non-believer are presented in that volume with surpassing poetic beauty and philoso-

phic profundity. In the anguish of his personal sorrows and physical suffering Job cries out repeatedly:

אחת היא, על כן אמרתי תם ורשע הוא מכלה

"It is all one,—therefore I say:
He destroyeth the innocent and the wicked."

ארץ נתנה ביד רשע

"The earth is given into the hand of the wicked."

Virtue is an illusion, justice a mockery. But in the end after listenting to God's answer, Job concludes:

לכן הגדתי ולא אבין, נפלאות ממני ולא אדע

"Therefore have I uttered that which I understood not,
Things too wonderful for me, which I knew not."

In the Books of Ezra and Daniel we have the answers that were given at critical periods in Jewish history to the various attempts made to entice the Jewish people into abandoning their own identity, and to disappear into the general mass of humanity. Ezra came to Eretz Yisroel to find that the small community of Jews who had returned from the Babylonian exile two or three generations previously were gradually losing themselves through intermarriage. A spirit of indifference and apathy as to the Jewish future settled upon the community, not because of *pressure from without,* but because of *decay from within.* The Jews appeared to be enjoying comparative peace and physical security, and the oft-repeated argument that Jews cannot maintain their identity in an environment of tolerance and

goodwill was about to be proved. Whom the hammer of persecution could not smash out of existence, the warm rays of a benign sun were to cause to evaporate, so to speak, into thin air. They were slipping into the abyss of assimilation and oblivion because they had lost hold of the spiritual treasure which alone could give reason and meaning to their life as a distinctive group. It was Ezra who then stepped into the breach. He recognized that the root of the evil was ignorance of the Torah, that was rampant in the community. By reading and expounding the Torah to them, he awakened anew their faith in their God, in His Torah and in the Jewish way of life. By substituting knowledge for ignorance, loyalty superseded indifference.

And just as Ezra represents Jewish steadfastness in the face of the blandishments of the environment, so Daniel is the prototype of all the thousands of martyrs who followed him in resolutely resisting even unto death the efforts made by our enemies to bludgeon us into submission. The answer of dignified defiance given by Daniel and his companions to the challenge of the Babylonian ruler that they either worship before his image or burn in the fiery furnace, has heartened Jewish sufferers throughout the ages. "If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us, He will deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and out of thy hand, O King. But if not, be it known unto Thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

But faith in the justice of God and courageous deter-

mination to resist the forces of assimilation are not enough. For one may believe in the justice of God without necessarily associating it with the preservation of Israel. And one may moreover be courageous in his own determination to live and die and yet feel that his people is waging a losing battle against unconquerable odds. In addition, therefore, to faith in a just God and to unwavering resistance to assimilation, the High Priest must fortify his soul with still a third factor, an immutable faith in the destiny of Israel. He must believe that Israel is an eternal people and that contemporary minor defeats or even major disasters are only passing episodes in Israel's unbroken march through the ages. And what can inspire that faith, more effectively than reading the pages of the Books of Chronicles, the pages of our history that record the struggles we had with foes who were physically far more numerous and more mighty than we, but who are remembered today primarily because they were our adversaries. The account of the rise and fall of empires when contrasted with the unbroken chain of Jewish tradition cannot but inspire hopefulness for the future and renew faith in the inviolability of God's pledge that "though the mountains may depart and the hills be moved His covenant with us will never be broken."

Sustained by this threefold faith the High Priest was to enter the Holy of Holies and perform his service. If the ritual that he carried out was to be more than a perfunctory routine, more even than an aesthetically pleasing performance, then his words and hands had to

be inspired by a moving and unshakable faith in God's justice, in Israel's way of life and in Israel's destiny.

Today, my friends, we have neither High Priest nor Temple with its Holy of Holies. Yet in more than a merely figurative way each one of us as a member of the people who were called the ממלכת כהנים the Kingdom of Priests, is to serve as his own High Priest. Our souls are our Holy of Holies, and during the course of this Yom Kippur's service it will be incumbent upon us to penetrate into the innermost sanctuary of our lives, and there with none but God observing us, take account of ourselves and offer our prayer before the Almighty. And if our visitation to the Holy of Holies of our own lives, if our communion with God in the recesses of our souls, is to serve the purpose of purifying, and elevating and strengthening the nature of our spiritual life, we must prepare ourselves on the threshold of the Holy of Holies even as the High Priest did. For we too, are surrounded by the forces of religious doubt, of assimilation and national defeatism, even as he was. The hosts of religious skepticism arraigned on all sides are too manifold and too obvious to require enumeration. Nor is that skepticism based primarily on science or philosophy. It is rooted rather in our worship of force, in our idolization of power no matter how that power is achieved.

The inroads that assimilation is making upon the stability and identity of the Jewish community are becoming ever wider and longer. Despite the apparent flurry of re-awakened Jewish interests stirred by the

mighty waves of anti-semitism swinging high throughout the world, more Jews are being forced to hold their Jewishness under cover, more are attempting wherever possible to escape the handicaps of Jewish indentification, than before. But even more are, wherever possible, voluntarily giving up all that makes for Jewish life and Jewish content. Dietary laws are almost universally discarded. Our own neighborhood is being overrun by "sanitary" butchers who openly sell "trefah" meat and do a flourishing trade among the old and young. The Sabbath has well-nigh disappeared from our midst. Synagogue attendance as compared to the total population is almost negligible. Jewish education is faced with mountainous obstacles. Christmas trees are maintaining their popularity in Jewish homes and intermarriage shows no sign of abating.

Along with that there comes a spirit of defeatism into the ranks of those who are still struggling to hold the fortresses of religious Jewish life. When they observe the size of the forces arrayed against them a feeling of despair and weakness overtakes them. What is the use of carrying on a hopeless struggle? Why seek to maintain in life that which apparently seems doomed to extinction? It is against these reflections that we must fortify ourselves on the eve of Yom Kippur.

There must first be faith that this world, all appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, is governed by a God of justice. Without that premise, without that as the cornerstone of our lives and actions, existence becomes hollow and stupid. Then the sound of the

machine-gun and the cannon is the voice of the sublimest wisdom; and the lion sinking its fangs and claws into the bleeding body of its prey is the symbol of the law of life. Then the meglomaniac Hitler and his bloody henchmen who rule Germany today are right in urging their people to place faith only in physical power, and their boast that such a regime of violence and injustice will last a thousand years appears more than the ravings of madmen. If there is no God and no justice then the sacrifice of present goods for future ideals is the height of folly; then Judah the Maccabee and his heroic followers, then Washington and his men at Valley Forge, were not patriots, but fools. If there is no God and no justice then mother love is not a divine impulse but an animal instinct, then Ivan the Terrible, Ghengis Khan, Attila the Hun and all of their ilk who deified power and slew, and enslaved man were the wisest of the race; and Moses fighting to free his oppressed brethren, and Lincoln laying down his life for the emancipation of the colored people and Bolivar fighting to free a continent, were the misguided sentimentalists among men.

And because we cannot and should not accept these conclusions we must on this Holy day reaffirm our faith that the world is governed by a God who is just and wise.

We must in addition reaffirm our faith in the value of Jewish life and resist like Ezra and Daniel both the lure as well as the threat of the environment. We dare never forget that the greatness of the generation of

Jews immediately preceding ours, that their strength of character, their power to endure hardships, their craving for knowledge, their industry and genius in business enterprise, their pioneer spirit in Eretz Yisroel were not accidents. The men who created a modern Hebrew literature, who colonized Eretz Yisroel, who built huge industrial enterprises, who organized exemplary labor unions, were Jews who came out of homes in which the Jewish religion predominated. They inherited healthy bodies and healthy minds because Jewish family life was always pure. They were trained in courage and in unfaltering optimism because they breathed it in the atmosphere of their homes and sucked it into the very fibre of their beings with their mother's milk. They inherited a modicum of idealism because all of Jewish life in its selfless service to God and devotion to Israel was one grand epic of idealism.

And finally, my friends, let us read Jewish history. Let us read the chronicles of our past and not be swayed by national defeatism. Our efforts in behalf of Israel are not in vain. We can achieve new spiritual heights, make new intellectual conquests in the realm of distinctly Jewish as well as broadly human activities here and now, even as our forefathers did in Babylonia, in Spain and in Eastern Europe. We will outlive our enemies. The Nazis will not last a thousand years and if they do we will be there to recite the funeral curse after them even as we attended the funeral procession of Egypt, Rome, the Spanish Bourbons, the Romanoffs and their like.

And if, my friends, I have stressed in the past as I would now again stress the primary importance of the Synagogue in Jewish life, I do so because I am firmly convinced that it above all symbolizes and embodies this threefold faith. Through its daily prayer we pronounce our faith in God and in His justice. Through the rich ceremonial of its services, the use of the Hebrew language, the Scrolls of the Torah, the Talit, and the observance of Sabbaths, Holidays and Festivals, the Synagogue testifies in this community to our faith in the goodness and beauty of our way of life. Through the maintenance of our Hebrew School we give compelling evidence of our faith in our future in this land as in the world generally. The synagogue is that חוט המשולש that threefold cord of which it has long been said לא במהרה ינתק that it will not easily be broken, and a Jewish community held together by such a cord will not easily be conquered.

Tomorrow, my friends, each one is to enter his own Holy of Holies to look into his soul and to utter his most fervent prayers with none but the Lord to hear him. Let us then prepare ourselves tonight. By an act of special devotion to the Synagogue, let us assure ourselves that when standing on the threshold of the Holy of Holies we are fortified by the threefold faith in God, in our Torah and in our destiny. With such preparation our prayers will be heard, and even as the face of the High Priest shone with a new glory as he returned from the Holy of Holies so, too, will our lives as individuals, and as a community take on a new lustre.

YOM KIPPUR

Howbeit, on the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; there shall be a holy convocation unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls; and ye shall bring an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And ye shall do no manner of work in that same day; for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement for you before the Lord your God . . . It shall be unto you a sabbath of solemn rest, and ye shall afflict your souls; in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye keep your sabbath.

Leviticus 23:27-32.

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IMMORTALITY AND THE JEW

by

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A century and a half ago, on Kol Nidre night, a strange event is said to have happened in a Philadelphia Synagogue. The story—or legend—is so beautiful that it should be told and retold to our people. It happened in the year when George Washington's troops were starving at Valley Forge, when it seemed as if the Continental Army of the Thirteen Colonies could not carry on unless money was forthcoming immediately. The patriot of the Revolution was Haym Salomon. And to him, Washington despatched a messenger appealing for a loan of four hundred thousand dollars. The messenger learned that Salomon was worshipping in his synagogue, and to that synagogue the messenger rushed. Salomon read the appeal. So urgent was the need for money that he halted the services and apprised the congregation of the message. The congregants were shocked. On Kol Nidre night, the spiritual holds sway; military matters dare not be discussed. But Salomon was adamant.

"We cannot return to our prayers," he cried, "while thousands of soldiers are starving, those thousands who are fighting for us, fighting that we Jews may pray here in safety."

The congregation pledged a goodly sum. Haym Salomon added the rest, every dollar he possessed, and sent the money to George Washington the following morning.

No story furnishes a greater thrill than that of Salomon, the lone Jewish financier of the Revolution, standing in the synagogue on the eve of Yom Kippur, begging his people to hold to their idealism and prove their love for their country. And yet, for a century and a half it has slumbered. Only within the past few years have people become alert to the greatness of this Jewish patriot. At last, it seems as if the mantle of immortality were about to fall on the shoulders of Haym Salomon. Immortality—deathlessness—about to fall on the shoulders of another Jew!

Yet all around us are people who do not believe in immortality of the Jew and Judaism. Life is composed of a large chorus of non-believers. "I don't believe" is the fashionable chant on the lips of the skeptic.

Unfortunately, we are living in a faithless age. Some college youths, wallowing in inflated ego, cry out, "Only an antiquated mind would believe in a God these days." Some business men, not all, but some say, "Why bother about a God. I have my stock of merchandise to think about. That brings me my daily bread and butter. God does not." The mother at home often deliberates, "Why try to bring spirituality into our surroundings? The family wants the radio." Whether we want to believe it or not a large percentage of humans is lacking in faith. These people feel a God is unnecessary

to their daily living and think they have no need for religion.

These are the persons who continually come to the Rabbis and argue, "Judaism is a dead religion. . . . Jews cannot survive. . . . Listen to the Assimilationists. . . . Think of the proportion of intermarriages. . . . Go into the Christian Science churches. . . . Jews everywhere but in their synagogues. . . ." I do not wonder that they philosophize, "The rabbis are all wrong, the religious schools are too weak. . . . Hebrew is a dead language. . . . The Bible is too morose. . . . The God of Israel is full of vengeance. . . . Judaism is dying."

In answer, the pulpit retaliates, "Judaism will live on. The Jew is here to stay. And when his life reflects the teachings of Moses and Isaiah and Micah, he cannot die." For one hundred and fifty years the glorious deeds of Haym Salomon, the Jew, have been eclipsed. but thanks to Professor Albert Bushnell Hart, of Harvard University, who has disclosed the historic facts, he faces immortality as never before.

Whoever has studied human progress from the beginning until today is familiar with the fact that religions are not immortal. Religions have been born, have grown old, have died. The entire pathway to human advance is strewn with images of dead gods and ruined temples. Religions are not immortal. But it is very different when the final "s" is dropped. Religions die but Religion lives on forever. "The King is dead," cries the herald, but before the sound of his voice has ceased, he cries again, "Long live the King." Individuals die,

the King never. Thus it is with religions; they die but RELIGION never!

The skeptic asks, "What is religion?"

Religion is man's thoughts concerning the relationship between himself and God—whatever his interpretation of God may be. Firstly, religion is thought. Secondly, religion is emotion. Thirdly, religion is thought plus emotion, which is manifest in outward forms such as customs and practices. Every religion that has ever existed consists of these three elements, the thought side which is theoretical, the feeling side which is emotional, and the ceremonial side. All these three parts exist in and constitute every religion the world has ever known.

I have been rather abstract. Let us now become more concrete and substitute a definite religion, Judaism, which is close to our minds and hearts. Let us find out whether Judaism needs us or we need it; whether Judaism is as immortal as some of us think it is, or whether we are deluding ourselves by a precious phantasm.

What is Judaism? Frankly, the question is so big, so argumentative that no ten persons will agree upon the same answer. Nor can any conclusive answer be compressed into one sermon. And in reality, the term "Judaism" should refer only to the religion of the people of the tribe of Judah, the names "Yehudi," "Judean" and "Jew" designating a member of that tribe. But in time "Judaism" was applied to the teachings of the Jews, to Jewish history, to Jewish ceremonials.

Judaism is not a religion based on accepted creeds,

like Christianity or Buddhism. It is bigger than creed. It occupies a holy sphere. It is a system of human conduct, a law of righteousness by which man can successfully live. Christianity caters to the Christian and is good for the Christian; Buddhism caters to the Buddhist and is good for the Buddhist. But Judaism has benefitted and is benefitting the entire world. The laws given on Mount Sinai govern all civilized peoples. Judaism is religious legislation, originally given to Jews so that they may live accordingly and be an example to neighborhood tribes, in the hope that those tribes would accept the Ten Commandments and make them their own.

Judaism produced a faith in God and passed it on to the world. This historic achievement was greater than all that preceded it and all that followed it.

Judaism is, above all else, a law of justice. In heathen times, save in the case of some exalted philosopher as Plato, might was deified. The slave, the poor, the stranger found no protection in religion until the Jew appeared. Obsessed with his precious Judaism, the Jew came forth and demanded righteousness and compassionate love for the afflicted, the homeless and the wayward. We of today have inherited that intense love for justice. Only a few weeks ago one of the leading State officials said to me, "The work you Jews are doing in California prisons and hospitals is an inspiration. Nothing like the Jewish Committee for Personal Service exists anywhere." I did not consider that statement a compliment. The constructive work of

Jewish souls has always been an inspiration. Why should that work stop in this era? Our faith is an inspiration today just as it was two thousand years ago.

Today, Judaism breathes the same elements of immortality—joy, hope, love, purity, truth—as twenty centuries ago. The pity of it all is that some of our co-religionists have lost faith in their own faith. They only use what little Judaism they have when they can further their own personal interests. Such non-Jewish Jews will never contribute anything to immortality.

A certain Jewess told me she does not believe in a temple; she does not believe in the need for Rabbis; she sees no necessity for observing Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur. But she does hold it highly necessary for our people to go among the Goyim to scatter Judaism. I told this woman that her Judaism is already so scattered she has none to give. A Jewess who objects to Jewish ceremonials, who cannot believe in a synagogue and sees no necessity for Jewish spiritual leaders can only be a Jewish anti-Semite!

How can a person of Jewish blood disbelieve in Yom Kippur, for example, the day when the Jew is at one with his God, with the God of his anscestors? Yom Kippur is more than merely the day of "atonement." It is that solemn period when the Jew harks back to all that has been sacred, when he is "at one" with his parents, "at one" with his loved ones, when memories of the precious past become a sacred event lived over again.

How can a person of Jewish faith disbelieve in the

synagogue, where one feels the life of hope and the security of justice? Where all is holy and uplifting?

How can a person of Jewish blood disbelieve in Jewish spiritual teachers—that little band which feeds the fire of Jewish immortality?

How can a person of Jewish blood disbelieve in the very spirit of Judaism? And our faith is a magnificent, holy spirit, a Prophetic spirit, that leads each one of us into those paths of daily living that culminate in spiritual and material success.

Does Judaism need the Jewish anti-Semite? No!!! But that type of person needs Judaism. Why? Because Judaism is bigger than he is, bigger than creed. Judaism has built not only for the Jew but also for the non-Jew. And the non-Jew has accepted.

How immortal are the teachings of our faith? Christianity rightfully should be called "Paulism." Paul of Tarsus, its founder, was a Jew. The foundation of real Christianity is Jewish. The Golden Rule was first spoken by Hillel, a great Rabbi. The famous Sermon on the Mount was delivered by a Jew to Jews, and that Sermon on the Mount was taken from the Talmud. Every Sunday morning, in Catholic and Protestant churches, thousands of children are taught what is known as "The Lord's Prayer." That prayer is a reflection of the teachings of the Talmud.

Every sentence in the New Testament was written by a Jew. All through the New Testament we find parallels to Old Testament teachings. As the Old Testament was completed before the New Testament was

begun, it is easy to grasp the influence of the Hebrew prophets upon New Testament thought.

Then who dare deny the IMMORTALITY OF JUDAISM?

Where stands the Jew who can intelligently and consistently say "I need no Judaism"? The very federal laws which protect this land were born out of Jewish laws. So how can a Jew say he needs no Judaism when he owes his daily protection to the teachings of Judaism?

But remember, Judaism owes its immortality to the fact that the Jew has shared his Godliness with the outside world. I mean, the Jewish Jew—none other can lay claim to immortality. Judaism has survived because we have preached and practiced the brotherhood of man. We cannot segregate ourselves. We cannot alienate ourselves from present-day conditions.

A few summers ago, Fate placed me in a foreign city where a group of our people proudly boasted that no non-Jew had ever crossed the portals of their social club. Their club was their pride; it was something sacred to them. It was the one spot in their city that was their very own. They could not very well exclude a Christian visitor who entered the synagogue during the hour of prayer. But in their club they were free to ignore non-Jews. And these Jews called their misplaced fervor, religious intensity. They even made a fetich of their aloofness. Were they not "God's Chosen People"? they said. And thus they flaunted their arro-

gant, supposedly-spiritual superiority into their Christian surroundings.

And what happened? When the Community Chest was started in that city, this group was ignored and, of course, this same group cried "Prejudice." I happened to arrive during the conflict and the Community Chest Committee, knowing of my interest in its development, asked me to explain its procedure at a public meeting. This I did—much to the consternation of our co-religionists who claimed that no Jew, who is a Jew at heart, would have addressed such a prejudiced assemblage. As a matter of fact, the Christians were not prejudiced against world Jewry. Although that city harbors seven thousand of our people, I felt that the Christians there had not met the real Jew, he who adds to the immortality of his faith. The Christians had never felt the fine influence that radiates from intelligent Judaism, that consciousness that makes possible our inherent goodness, our tolerance, our love for peace, our loyalty to everything fine.

The Jews of that community insisted that they were being persecuted and I said, "Your persecution will cease when you invite Christians into your snobbish social club." They cried, "Never. That invitation will never be issued." Accordingly, I declined the invitation to attend a five o'clock tea but later consented to go on one condition, that they invite a few of the Community Chest organizers. Some very superior persons came and from that hour a new spirit has been evident in Jewish-Christian relations.

THE MESSAGE OF ISRAEL

The days of the European ghetto are over—and of the American ghetto as well. Our only bid for immortality lies in how we influence mankind. A group of fifty Jews sitting down and wailing against the injustices of the world will accomplish nothing. We can only be understood and loved in the broadest sense when the Christian world knows the true Jew.

Years ago, the ghetto Jew worked for and dreamed to perpetuate his faith so that it might be re-born in his offspring. But, today, the Jewish Jew, no longer harassed by political slavery, flings his Moses-like spirit beyond his fireside, flings his soul-cry, "Shema Yisroel," out into the world where he stands unashamed of his past and proud of his Jewish future. Triumphant in his idealism, he becomes part of that immortal chain of great men like Moses and David and Isaiah and Jeremiah—and Haym Salomon—each a glowing lamp in Judaism's light of IMMORTALITY.

Stefan Zweig, in his "Jeremiah," draws a vivid picture of our immortal march:

We who have wandered down the road of purification,
Everlastingly vanquished . . . everlastingly overthrown . . .
Unceasingly broken and unceasingly renewed,
The mock and sport of all nations on earth.

We have wandered through the eternities,
A remnant . . . 1934 - May -
Yet, numberless, we march on to God,
To God who is the beginning and the end.
To God who is our home.

What then is the secret of our immortality?
Our faith in the invisible.
Men can be slain but the God who lives in men can never die.

PROFIT MOTIVE AND PROPHET MOTIF

by

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PROFIT MOTIVE AND PROPHET MOTIF

by

MORRIS S. LAZARON

"We have departed from Thy Commandments and Thy beneficent ordinances, and it hath not profited us."

This great cry from our liturgy to the lips of Israel's millions. It might well be the atonement cry of all peoples. Does its echo sound like a shallow, empty phrase, or does it perhaps haunt our hearts overburdened with anxiety, uncertainty, doubt, forboding and despair? Has this night then some message for us, for our time? Has Judaism something to say that might be guide and guerdon for our distracted world?

What is the burden of Israel's olden teaching?

Man does not live by bread alone. Man is something more than arms and hands. There are such things as right and wrong, truth and falsehood, justice, righteousness and loving kindness. Dreams are real. Life is sacred. Duty, personal and social, is the stern daughter of the voice of God. Ignore these things at your peril! Selfishness, greed, inhumanity, violate the mystic sanctities of life and bring inevitable calamity. This is the lesson of history. This is the message of our prophets from Moses to Malachi, from whose altars the prophets of later ages have taken the sacred fire. On this luminous canvas of our teaching let us limn the picture of our times.

In our era of scientific invention and mechanical progress, all the vast resources of the world challenged the genius of man. The hidden powers in earth and water and air have been tracked down and harnessed to the service of man. Yet what has he? The very hour of his triumph reveals to man that the victory of his mechanical genius is an empty one. Chaos reigns in the world today.

We search for causes and cures. Some blame war debts and reparations; some blame prohibition; some blame the tariff; some blame the international bankers. It is becoming increasingly clear that all are to blame and none is to blame. It is becoming clear that the faults are inherent in the system! In the system with its dependence solely upon the profit motive, with its vast accumulations of wealth inequitably distributed; with this wealth an autocratic power thoroughly selfish, often irresponsible and conscienceless and frequently ruthless, in the system which sets at naught the eternal verities of justice and mercy.

Depending entirely upon the profit motive, the productive machine was speeded up. New markets had to be found. There followed vast and unintelligent expansion, high pressure salesmanship, installment buying. Everyone lived and lives on credit, and puts off till some unknown tomorrow the obligations of today.

The machinery of modern business is impersonal, cut-throat, death-dealing. It knows little friendship, but talks only in terms of profit and loss. Many business men have told me of their predicament; how they

were forced to continue some policy of which they do not approve, because of the keenness of business strife. Their competitors did this or that, and in order to keep their own heads above water they willy nilly had to follow suit. Business has become warfare, whose battles are just as pitiless as battles fought in war, whose casualties are unemployed men, undernourished women and children, wrecked homes, innumerable suicides and the anguish of millions. And the battlefront is not limited to one country or two, but rings the world as a mighty chain of misery.

Meanwhile something happened to the souls of men and women. Moral stamina, spiritual integrity, character was broken down. People did not want to work, yet they expected for the least effort to get every luxury. We all desired to get ahead fast. We ran after novelties, and were charmed at every new thing. We lost a sense of values, and could not judge between truth and its counterfeits. We are like those birds which frequent the Golden Horn, of which travellers say they are always on the wing and never rest, for no one ever saw them light on land or water. The natives call them "lost souls." We are the generation of lost souls, because for us there is no peace.

> "We have departed from Thy Commandments and Thy beneficent ordinances, and it hath not profited us."

It has become perfectly clear that just because we can produce more goods is no sign that we have more good and that men are happier. We have greater

wealth, but we still have poverty and economic serfdom.

There can be no progress so long as increased wealth is used to build up great fortunes, to increase luxury for the few, to make sharper the contrast between those who have and those who need.

I know the old arguments. Think of the vast foundations, the magnificent gifts, the beneficent agencies which great fortunes have made possible. Has not the time come to inquire if these things cannot be done in some other way without the concomitant of so much human misery?

Is there any excuse for suffering such a situation to continue? Can nothing be done to prevent the brutalizing of the owner or the degradation of the worker? Shall we merely accept the situation as usual and inevitable?

We talk of the rights of man, and under our system we fail to provide the most elemental right of all—the right to work. Think of the unemployed, millions in number. They say to us: We are willing and able to work. We ask you, what are you going to do for us? Are you going to give us work, or do you expect us to remain quiet and in a composed and gentlemanly fashion see our homes broken, our wives and children languish in starvation? Do you expect that we shall forever be satisfied to eat at your hands the bread of charity? Today these questions cry out for answer.

We pride ourselves on our system of public education, and yearly send out thousands of our youth from

the high schools and colleges for what—for the ever increasingly difficult task of finding a job! We have frowned upon hereditary nobility, and proudly declare there are no castes in America—but we just as surely build up here by hereditary distribution of property a caste system which is not an aristocracy of intelligence or culture, but one of money.

The very sources of public information (our newspapers and magazines) are poisoned, and it is difficult for the average man and woman to get facts.

Those elected to represent us play politics at this hour. Plans to meet the distress are discussed on the basis of how they will affect personal or party fortune, not on the question of their effectiveness to meet the needs of the day. This is done openly and shamelessly. We cannot increase taxes, we cannot lower tariffs, we cannot do this or that, because forsooth an election is in the offing! No more flagrant "playing politics with human misery" has ever demoralized our public life or degraded the public conscience.

Some mouth the old phrases, states' rights, individual rights, no interference in business by the government. They forget that business has had every chance for fifty years to correct these abuses which have arisen from time to time with ever increasing calamity, and has done practically nothing about them. Is it not time to ask whether these things are not inherent in the present system of things which disregards so flagrantly and brutally the sanctities of life?

If the utility interests had had any public conscience

they would not have indulged in their indefensible propaganda, subsidized the channels of education and blocked or passed regulatory legislation to their own interest. If the banking interests had had any public conscience they would not suggest the loading of our national deficit on our children and our children's children by long-term borrowing, nor the cancellation of war debts while remaining eloquently silent about their own holdings abroad.

What throws most light on the present system, however, with its insistence on the profit motive, is its damning the Soviets vocally and helping them with expert advice, technical knowledge and machinery at the same time. The Communist experiment if successful means the death of capitalism. Everyone thinks so. Most of our great industrial and financial leaders fear so. Yet these very leaders help Russia in every way because it means present money in their pockets. So far as the future is concerned, let the next generation worry! I'm not defending Russia. I'm not a Communist. I don't want Communism in this country. Indeed, I do not believe that is the solution of our problem. But it is obvious that the kind of civilization modern business, banking and industry have built, a civilization dominated by the profit motive, is apparently incapable of establishing justice. An adjustment must be made, and it will be made either by orderly process of parliamentary procedure or by revolution and disaster. What is demanded is nothing more nor less than this: that the dominant class voluntarily abdi-

cate its autocratic authority. Political democracy without social and industrial democracy is a farce and a falsehood.

No greater opportunity ever waited upon men in public life than that which beckons to the elected leaders of our people today. And further—every angle of approach to our unemployment, finance, disarmament, debts and reparations, must be viewed as but one single aspect of a world-wide problem.

What would happen to a patient if every symptom were treated separately and without relation to his general condition? What would happen to a great business if no department were correlated with any other and each went its own way? The patient would die and the business would smash. So, too, the patient —our United States—must have a general diagnosis. It cannot continue under the present system, with every man for himself and the devil get the hindmost policy!

The situation is new and unprecedented, and it demands new and unprecedented methods. It demands men of vision and of courage. It demands intelligence on the part of leaders and peoples. It demands sacrifice on the part of all.

The first shock of transition to the new day must be borne by the rich. They who have profited most by the system which has produced misery and despair for millions must give more substantially—not of their surplus, but at a sacrifice. What boots it if today they save half their fortune, if tomorrow they lose it all? It is for them to decide whether the transition from

present injustice to future justice is to be peaceful or bloody.

But the ultimate solution is not charity. No man wants charity. Justice is the only solution. The present system, which has ruthlessly and greedily taken where it could and from whom it could and flouted the eternal sanctities of life, must be reconstructed upon justice and must be charged through with humanity.

No social order is of itself sacrosanct. It endures so long as it makes for human happiness and progress. That is, I believe, the law of life. When a system produces a situation such as obtains today, it contains within itself the cancerous germ of its own destruction. The choice of the capitalist system today is this: Find a cure for our ills or die! Mend your errors, right your wrongs or go the way of imperial Rome and the feudal civilization. Wipe out the shame of human misery of wars, the dread of wars, or the masses of the world will rise and destroy you!

But our problem is not only a national one. The world is a unit today, an economic unity, which transcends even the bounds of racial or political nationality. It has been shown that we cannot manufacture here in America that most important of all construction materials, steel, without importing essential ingredients from other lands. Even this great country, unparalleled in national resources, is not economically independent. Try to cure Germany's money troubles and the English pound breaks, and we are involved. The

entire world is so closely knit together that a strike or revolution in a most unimportant country at the ends of the earth affects the trade balance of a dozen nations.

As Europe is organized today, with its capitalistic background, with its dominant French money power economy in which we have a half share, in that organization and with that background war is inevitable. That war means the creation all over Europe of one of two things: either Communistic dictatorship in alliance with Russia or Fascist dictatorship in alliance with great banking and business interests.

That is the final and terrible division. The trend of events is sure and faster than many think. What will you say in that day when the drums beat and the armies march again in Europe? What we say and what we do now may forefend the issue. Our silence, our hesitation, our provincialism, our fears, paralyze not only our own national recovery but world recovery.

> "We have departed from Thy Commandments and Thy beneficent ordinances, and it hath not profited us."

We have been blind, we have been selfish, we have been stupid! Now is our great opportunity.

There are but two choices left us. To play the game of power politics—and we are in a better position than any other nation to play it—or to take the place to which destiny and the day summon us.

We may say: we'll none of Europe. Let Europe stew and melt in its own mess. We have the resources,

the man power. We can say this. But can we do this? A thousand economic realities cry out NO! We cannot even live unto ourselves alone. Are we willing to live on each other? To reduce the markets for our goods; to let our accumulated capital go idle? That will mean a steady reduction in the standard of American life. That way lies war!

Or we can act the part of brother. We can join the World Court. We can sit down at the table of the League of Nations. We can thus calm the fears of France and Europe. Certainly we now take our chances with the destinies of Europe. Why not have something to say at the deliberations? Their decisions affect us. Why not help make them? We can say: We shall no longer stand away; we cannot be of the world and not in it. We must all make sacrifices. We relinquish all debts owing to us. We shall remove all unnecessary tariffs. Let us lay down our arms. Let us understand that the new order is here. You Europeans on your part must make sacrifices. You, too, must lay down your arms. You, too, must be willing to right the wrongs of Versailles. You must relinquish the power-economy which makes for war. We shall stand with you and by you. You need no longer be doubtful what we shall do. This is our common world. It is large enough for us all. It has wealth enough for us all. We shall build the world of peace. WE shall create the kingdom of God.

Impossible? An idle dream? Difficult, but not impossible if men care enough! I do not minimize the

adjustments, the difficulties, the hazards, the enormous problems that only economists, engineers and scholars can meet. But let our country make such dramatic move and leave the details to intelligence and time. Let our statesmen declare a way in the wilderness and a great sigh will go round the world and a heavy burden will be lifted and a mighty shout of gladness will hearten the peoples as millions rise in prayerful thanksgiving. And ways of attainment will be found.

What we today must learn is to see our times in the great perspective of history. I do not advocate any particular machinery or system. That must be the task of economists and engineers.

But a force is rising out of the depths of life which will not be denied. It gathers power each day. We must move forward to meet it. That force if accepted, organized and directed will save another holocaust of humanity more terrible than 1914. That force is the power of the social conscience. That force is the mystic power not ourselves—even God who demands righteousness and justice as the foundations of humanity!

The new idea has already come into industry. It is a far cry from Gary to Farrell and Willard and Swope. The present head of the United States Steel Corporation pleads for a retention of the present wage scale; the president of the great railroad system is severely critical of the capitalist order; the executive of the General Electric Company demands the creation of a national organization in every industry to regulate

under Federal government supervision production, distribution, prices and labor. The social conscience is roused. Politics concerns itself more and more with the social problems of the community and the state. Education emphasizes adjustment to the social organism and development of effectiveness and richness of life with one's fellows. Criminology condemns not only the criminal, but hails the social body to the bar and indicts society for making the criminal what he is. Modern philanthropy seeks not only to relieve immediate distress, but to create conditions which prevent it.

Once again religion's voice must be heeded. "Justice, justice shalt thou pursue." "The work of righteousness shall be peace."

> "We have departed from Thy Commandments and Thy beneficent ordinances, and it hath not profited us."

This is the great atonement time for all humanity. We have relied upon things. We have said machines will save us. We have added house to house and field to field. We have ground down the faces of the poor and robbed the orphan and the widow. We have made slaves of men and condemned millions to destitution, hopelessness and despair. We have violated the laws of life in that we have made justice hide her head and charity has fled from our hearts. We have refused to bear our share of the burdens of humanity and expected to profit from others' loss. Therefore have these things come upon us.

What have these things to do with us, you say—international banking, war debts, the world of industry, the problem of unemployment? I've all I can do to worry about my own affairs. I've my own troubles and heartaches.

The conduct of every one of us is involved in these larger issues. We have been caught up and carried along. The spirit of the system and the times dominate us and our lives and interests. We, too, are unhappy and weary.

Because we, too, have let the profit motive govern our lives. It has influenced us in our decisions; in the friends we choose for our children, in the schools they go to, in the amusements they and we seek, in the vocations for which they prepare themselves. Because of our greed for *things,* worldly things—you and I and every one of us, the whole speed and tempo of life, its greed and lust has been accelerated.

We have gotten things. We have filled our lives with possessions. But they have availed us not. We put our trust in stocks and bonds, in our steady employment, in our successful business, in the Federal Reserve Board. We shut out the still small voice. We followed our own headlong way and filled our lives with needless cares and worries that we created for ourselves, because we had nothing to trouble us. We poured out much of idealism, our willingness to take life seriously, our faith in God and goodness, and when the crash came, when our coffers dwindle or are empty, we find we have no inner resources. We find we've

lost that which makes for strength and courage and hope. Yes, money gives strength while it lasts. And courage and hope. But take money away and the strength and courage and hope that money gives are gone. But there is another strength, another courage, another hope, that no money can buy. It is the strength and courage and hope that come from belief in the goodness at the heart of life, the purpose at the end of life and from the will to align one's self with this goodness and this purpose.

We have relied on the *profit* motive, and we have found it vain and empty. Let us substitute for it the *prophet* motive, the conviction of Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah that goodness is real, sincerity is worthwhile, justice is sure and love the rarest privilege of men. Let us see if the practice of these things does not bring us bounty and blessing. I see no other salvation for you or me or for humanity.

With this burning conviction we must face the problems of our personal and national life. This is the spirit of the new era of which we are privileged to be not only witness but creator. This is the light that breaks through the present gloom. This is the fire at which our chilled souls can warm themselves. It is the hearth round which will gather the hosts of humanity, not humanity uprooted, but humanity chastened, socialized, redeemed!

MEMORY

by

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MEMORY

by

SAMUEL ROSENBLATT

The service we are about to hold in honor of our beloved dead on this holiest day of the year is entitled in Hebrew *"Hazkarath N'shamoth"* and has as its purpose to preserve in our minds the recollection of that portion of the personalities of our dear departed that transcends the grave. In a narrow sense it is the memories of our immediate predecessors that we invoke. In reality, however, our reminiscential activity on this festival which is devoted to our spiritual rejuvenation is much broader than that. It is not confined to any one generation. It embraces the entire Jewish past. It extends over the whole span of the history of our people. We have occasion in the course of the lengthy ritual of this Day of Atonement to review the various vicissitudes in the checkered career of Israel starting from its humble beginnings as the members of a single family, extending through the time of national greatness and power, and continuing to the period of a long and harrowing exile. Joy and sorrow, triumph and defeat relieve each other in rapid succession. *"Ashrey ayin ra'athah eleh,"* "Happy the eye that hath seen these things," is the refrain of one liturgical selection, one that describes the glories of the Temple and the splendor of the priesthood. *"Eleh ezk'rah w'nafshi alay eshpchah,"* "These things I recall and my soul do I

pour out for them," is the beginning of another, the lamentation for the Ten Martyrs. Such is the panorama that is conjured up from the recesses of the past by the power of memory. The scenes are inspiring, uplifting. They buoy up our national self-respect. They enhance our pride. They present to us examples of heroism, of courage, of saintliness and martyrdom.

What a marvelous gift this faculty of memory with which the human being has been endowed by the Creator! It is man's guide in life, the compass that directs him through the trackless sea of existence. If man were unable to remember from one moment to the next, the world would be a complete blank to him, a labyrinth in which it would be impossible for him to find his way. He would not know where to secure his food or how to protect himself against wind or weather. He could acquire no habits. He would be incapable of responsible behaviour because all these are dependent upon memory. How helpless a human being is without memory we can see from the cases of persons afflicted with the mental disease of amnesia or lapse of memory. They are worse than infants, these unfortunates. It is impossible to train them, for nothing one tells them makes an impression on them. They have no idea of what they are doing because they forget one moment what has taken place the moment before. And so life can have no meaning for them, for in order to see meaning in it, it is necessary to remember today what occurred yesterday and to connect one event with the other.

All this that we have asserted of individual existence applies equally to our life as members of a group, and every human being must belong to some group, whether it be a community, a nation or a state. No person can live in complete isolation. As individuals we have our individual features, our feelings of pleasure and pain, of hunger and thirst. From the group in which we live we derive our culture, our civilization, our ideals, our style of dress, the language we speak, our mores and our morals. Whether we are civilized human beings or naked savages, whether we are physicians, engineers, merchants, or mechanics by profession, or we eke out our livelihood by hunting and fishing, whether we speak a modern language like English or the Hottentot dialect, whether we adhere to a monotheistic faith or we believe in spirits, depends not on ourselves but on whether we are brought up in a civilized environment or whether we happen to have been reared among the aborigines in the wilds of a jungle.

In order to be able to get along with the rest of the group of which we form a part, we must have some acquaintance with its practices, it habits, its ways of thinking, its interests and ideals. In other words, we must have memory or we are lost. Now there are human beings who, as individuals lack nothing insofar as the faculty of memory is concerned, but in their group relationships suffer from amnesia. They know nothing about the stock from which they are sprung. They do not remember aught of the past of their race.

They recognize no spiritual kinship with those to whom they are related by the ties of blood. Oceans of difference separate them from their forbears or from their contemporaries not so afflicted. What saves these individuals from the usual effects of national amnesia is the fact that they have secured substitutes for their own progenitors, that they have been successful in attaching themselves to another race even as the raven and the cuckoo attach themselves to alien species. All is well with them so long as their adopted relatives tolerate them in their midst. But woe betide them once the latter decide to cast out the intruders, to send them back to those from whom they came. They are then the unhappiest of men in this world because they can find no place for themselves in human society. Those with whom they have everything in common reject them and those with whom they are forced to live are total strangers to them.

Such, my friends, is today the sad lot of many persons of Jewish descent in Germany, people who years ago pried themselves loose from the Jewish community, casting off their racial heritage in order to become integrated with the German fatherland, and who are now excluded from German life on account of the Jewish blood that flows in their veins. Where shall they go these Jewish Germans, many of whom have for several generations been loyal members of the Catholic or Protestant churches, who have forgotten that their ancestors a century or two ago prayed in the Synagogue, spoke Yiddish, observed Saturday as their day

of rest, and shunned swine's flesh? The Aryan Germans, whom they consider brothers, would not have them and into the Jewish community they do not fit, for after all they are not Jews. Particularly pathetic is the plight of their children, who having been brought up in total ignorance of their Jewish origin, often with distinct anti-Jewish leanings, find themselves discriminated against in school, made to sit on special benches, separated from their Aryan comrades, and come home perplexed and bewildered and ask their parents, *"Sind wir auch Juden? Was sind den eigentlich Juden?"*

Is it any wonder that people placed in such a situation do away with their lives? What future can there be in the world for those who have lost their past? How much happier in contrast with these unfortunates is the position, spiritually at least, of the Jew who remained loyal to his people and his faith, who continued to study the traditional Jewish lore and to worship his God in the manner of his ancesters? He was not lost when Hitler decided to drive the Jew from Germany. He knew that he had friends all over the world, that every Israelite in other lands was his brother not only in belief but also in blood. He did not grow despondent because of the calamity that had overtaken him for he was aware of the fact that what was happening to him was nothing new in Jewish history, that suffering was often the portion of his race in the past. His forbears had been persecuted in the same way as he and in the same place, but they survived their oppressors. Israel, the Jewish people, did not perish. He saw a difference

between Jew and Gentile. God had distinguished between Israel and the nations. The pain therefore of being cast out was not so great. His career was not ended just because Germany rejected him. His future was secure because he had a past to point his way. And of him does the Psalmist say (Psalms LXXXIX, 16) "Happy are the people that know the meaning of the Shofar's blast. They will walk in the light of God's countenance," i. e., those Jews, whose hearts respond to the memories of the past awakened by the sound of the ram's horn, they are destined to witness the glories of the future.

My friends, the experience of German Jewry should be a lesson for us all. It indicates how important it is to be acquainted with the history of our people, how vital it is for us in the dreary present to refreshen the memories of our glorious past in order that we may be encouraged through its inspiration to build an even more glorious future. The past is the light-house that illumines our path; without which we would grope like blind men in the dark. It tells us what we are. It informs us whence we are sprung. It brings us in contact with the accumulated wisdom of our race. It supplies us with an aim, an objective in life. It points out our mission, our destiny. The Jew who knows the history of his people is never lost. Misfortune does not stun him. Disaster does not overwhelm him. He realizes that there are ups and downs in the careers of nations as in those of individuals, accordingly, in adversity he keeps a stiff upper lip and despite all the

storms that rage about him walks proudly to his goal.

This is a lesson of which we American Jews stand sorely in need, because we have been extremely negligent in this matter hitherto, and it is not necessary to go very far in order to prove how remiss we have been. What transpires here in the synagogue is evidence of it. The lack of interest in the service, the listlessness, the constant moving in and out, all this is due in a large measure to the fact that our younger generation does not understand the prayers, and when I say "does not understand them" I do not refer necessarily to the Hebrew original but to the English translation which is found in our holiday prayer-books alongside the Hebrew. Why do our worshippers manifest so little interest in this translation? The reason is that the ideology of these prayers is foreign to them for had they known their import, had they sensed their beauty, had they penetrated their meaning they would have sat glued to their seats from six in the morning until six in the evening. Our mothers who knew no Hebrew understood these prayers better than their modern daughters who are fortunate enough to possess a translation, because the former were steeped in the atmosphere that gave rise to these outpourings of the Jewish soul and they divined their meaning without knowing the significance of the individual words.

You may perhaps propose as a panacea that we cast out the old prayers and replace them with liturgical compositions of a more modern make. But that would not be a solution. The prayers would not be traditional,

Jewish, our own, but something else. Or you may suggest abbreviation. That, too, would not settle the difficulty. Our service would no longer inspire, edify. It takes time for enthusiasm to be aroused. No! Destruction is not the way out. It is easy to break down. Anybody can qualify as a member of a wrecking crew because it requires no skill. To build, however, one must be an architect, an engineer. The answer to our problem is to be found in the injunction of Moses which we read this week: "Remember the days of yore. Understand the years of bygone generations. Ask thy father and he will tell thee, thy elders and they will say it to thee." (Deuteronomy XXXII, 7)

This day of atonement when we draw up memoranda of the merits of our ancestors, the achievements of the Jewish people in the past, hoping that thereby we might escape annihilation, is the fitting time to make a beginning, to devote ourselves earnestly to the consideration of these mementoes, to learn and teach our children more about the past, to occupy ourselves with it and study it even as our predecessors did in former generations, and support actively those institutions that exist for the purpose of preserving the Jewish cultural heritage. We must realize once and for all that it is impossible to lead a Jewish life without a knowledge of Jewish history and tradition. Ignorance is more injurious to Judaism's existence than heresy. We can stand disagreement but we cannot endure indifference. That is no doubt the reason why a double warning is issued by our Torah against forgetfulness. "Take heed

unto thee and take very much heed unto thy soul lest thou forgettest the things which thine eyes have seen and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life." (Deuteronomy IV, 9). And that is also the function of this memorial service. They who carry it out will be included in the final redemption of Israel. For as sure as we are suffering now so will we some day be redeemed as it has been said by the prophet: "Is Ephraim a dear son unto me, a darling child? For whenever I speak of him I shall surely remember him." (Jeremiah XXXI, 19) Let us hope that this day will soon come and that we will all live to see the salvation of Israel when God will remember His people. Amen.

SUCCOTH

On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord. On the first day shall be a holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work. Seven days ye shall bring an offering made by fire unto the Lord; on the eighth day shall be a holy convocation unto you; and ye shall bring an offering made by fire unto the Lord; it is a day of solemn assembly; ye shall do no manner of servile work.

Leviticus 23:34-36

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MINDS WHICH NEVER GROW UP— When Do We Reach Maturity?

by

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Much of the knowledge in the human mind never finds its way into speech. We all know more than we ever put into words. It is advisable, however, to try to bring our thoughts to expression because once an idea is put into a sentence, it becomes clearer and more exact. For example, everyone is aware of the difference between life and death, yet when we try to put that difference into a sentence we will encounter surprising difficulties and thus realize that our notion of the distinction is a vague one. The first difference that would suggest itself to us would possibly be that that which is alive has the power of independent movement, while that which is dead cannot move. But this definition breaks down before a plant. A plant has life, yet generally it cannot move unless the wind rustles its leaves. After thinking about the matter further we finally arrive at this fairly correct distinction: the plant differs from a stone in that a plant can grow, a stone can only be added to. To live, therefore, means to have the power of growth.

Our bodies and our minds are both living entities. Hence, both body and mind have the power to grow. The development of the body is not under our control. Yet each of them grows under different conditions.

It is nature which leads it from infancy to boyhood, from boyhood to youth, from youth to adulthood. Without the aid of human devices, in every type of human society, in the jungles of Africa, in the bush of Australia, the human body grows to the perfection of maturity. Thus our physical development is provided for by nature. But our mental growth is under our own control. Whether our mind matures does not depend wholly upon blind forces. If the mind is let alone we cannot expect that like the body it will of itself reach full growth. The mind does not grow automatically, it needs conscious effort in order that it may develop. It is the function of education to make the mind grow at the same rate as the body grows. When nature converts our body from that of an infant to that of an adult, education must convert the mind from that of a child to that of an adult. But human educational systems are unfortunately imperfect. In spite of our efforts at mental training, the body usually outstrips the mind, and we often observe that mature bodies house minds which have never grown up.

How do we know when a mind is still childish? The famous psychologist, Alfred Adler, has suggested a useful test. Adler has worked in the Vienna public schools, conducted clinics and studied thousands of children. His observations are cautious and reliable. His recent book, "Understanding Human Nature," deals with the question of the maturity of the mind. His conclusions may be summed up as follows: A human being cannot be judged as a separate individual.

He must not be gauged merely by his personal achievements. He should be considered as part of his group. His development is not complete unless he has fitted himself into society. Therefore, as a child grows up, his problem is how to adjust himself to the world. If he so develops that he cannot cooperate with his fellow human beings, then, to that extent, he is still a child. For to grow up mentally means to grow out socially. A mature mind is one which enables us to take our part in human society.

As we apply this definition even tentatively, we find that it seems to be correct. We notice that those characteristics which we naturally recognized as childish are the very characteristics which keep us out of human society and make it difficult for us to cooperate with others. These childish and therefore isolating and anti-social characteristics are brought out clearly in an incident related in the portion of the Scriptures which we read during the winter months in all Jewish Synagogues. The Scriptural portion describes a scene in the land of Egypt where the aged Jacob lies dying upon his bed. He is surrounded by his twelve sons. He has blessed his sons and advised them. As he now gazes upon them, a new doubt must have entered his mind. He sees their great strong mature bodies, but he wonders whether their minds, their personalities have kept pace with their physical growth. Will the future show that they have the mental maturity which reveals itself in social cooperation? Will they have the power of living together in brotherly unity? Or

will his family break up because of the innate immaturity of his sons? He looks at them and tries to read the answer in their faces. Then, puzzled, he turns his face towards the wall and under the cloud of that doubt, he dies. His sons weep for him. They take up his body and carry it into Palestine. They lay it to rest in Hebron where his father and grandfather are buried. Thus Jacob "is gathered to his father," and the twelve sons return home to Egypt.

The events which occur when they are back home indicate to what extent Jacob's doubts were justified. The moment they are in Egypt, Joseph leaves them to go to the palace where his work as the viceroy of the land awaits him. Left alone, the brothers begin to tremble for their safety. They imagine that now that their father is dead, Joseph will hate them. They reason: He will remember the wrongs which we committed when we were boys together in Canaan, how we mocked him and put him into a pit and sold him into slavery. So in their terror they send a messenger to the palace to their brother Joseph saying: "You must not hate us now that father is dead. Forgive us. Pardon the iniquities which we still remember to this day." When Joseph heard this message, he said not a word but tears welled to his eyes. Why did he weep? Why did this petition sadden him so? Surely he wept out of pity for them. He was sorry that they remembered all those bitter things which he had long forgotten. He realized that his brothers were still living under the stress of an ancient quarrel. They were still

sensitive about something that occurred forty years ago. They were childish enough to hoard in their memories what they should have long outgrown. He wept because these grown-up men were such mental children!

It is easily observable that those races who remember grudges longest are the least mature. The most undeveloped group in the United States are the mountaineers of Kentucky; and they are the feudists. They will remember a quarrel for three or four generations. In Asia, the people that are the least developed are the wild Bedouins of the Arabian desert. Their mode of dress, speech and organization are the same today as they were five thousand years ago. Being the least matured, the most childish, they are the most vengeful. One murder will start a blood feud which will ultimately wipe out whole tribes. Those groups which are the most childish remember insults longest.

Sensitiveness to hurt is quite normal in a child. It has its proper place in the child's life. Just as the newly opened leaf is for its own protection sensitive to nature's heat and cold, so a child is rightly sensitive and easily hurt. It is, indeed, natural to be sensitive but it is unnatural to remain sensitive. To carry over an excessive "touchiness" from childhood to youth and through youth to manhood, to be the sort of person who remembers every ancient slight, who is hurt by any chance word, is to prove oneself pathetically immature. Joseph had sensibly forgotten all the old insults, the bygone quarrels. Being mature, he was tolerant. It is always an evidence of maturity never to waste time

on old disputes, never to bother with chance insults but to go forward and do the work of the world.

The messenger left Joseph and reported to the terrified brothers that Joseph seemed moved by their message; that he wept. Thereupon, realizing that Joseph's heart was not adamant, they decided that they could safely come into his presence. Entering the room where he sat upon the throne, they prostrated themselves before him and said, "We are thy slaves." That should have been a glorious moment for Joseph. It ought to have given him great satisfaction, for this was just the situation for which he had longed when he was a boy. When he was young all his dreams expressed the same hope, namely, that some day he would lord it over his brothers. He once dreamed that he and they were binding sheaves of wheat in the field and that their sheaves bowed down to his. Again he dreamed that the sun and moon and eleven stars (meaning his parents and his brothers) bowed down to him. The younger son, despised and persecuted, yearned for the day when he would be the master. But now that his dreams had come true, they seemed to have lost their savor. He bade his brothers rise and said, "Am I God that you should bow down before me?" Joseph had become mature.

The desire to dominate, the wish to be lord and center of everything is always a mark of childishness. A child is young and weak, and is under the control of others. It is natural for a child to day-dream that some day he will grow up and be very great, that he

will be a master of men and all will bow down before him. These notions are useful; they help develop in the child the self-confidence of an independent personality. But when an adult still cherishes the day-dream that he is or is to be "the greatest," that he is the center of his world, and when he tries to maintain that pose of being all-important, he proves that he is still a child. Those who constantly demand to be noticed, those who bully their households by feigned sickness, those who always yearn to domineer, those who desire to be the lords of their circle, the petty tyrants, have never fully grown up. One must learn to reach the realization that other people are also people; that their rights are as sacred as our desires. Whatever Joseph may have dreamed of when he was a boy, when he became grown up he was wiser. He had once yearned for mastery but when his brothers grovelled before him, he said, "Rise, I am not your God." Only those who cherish the ideal of equality and seek co-operation with their fellowmen have achieved mental adulthood. Respect for the personality of others, the unforced willingness to co-operate, the genuine democracy of the soul, these are the evidences of spiritual growth.

Joseph reveals still another characteristic of the fully developed mind. When the brothers arose and sat with him as equals, they started to grow reminiscent about the past. Joseph said, "You, my brothers, had planned evil against me. You had conspired against me." At that recollection, indignation must have reawakened for a moment in his heart. The world was unfair to

him when he was a boy. He had suffered unjustly. How frequently do children have a sense of the unfairness of life. They often complain that someone else receives things which they should have received; that someone else is the favorite of the family. This rebelliousness in children may be a nuisance but it is not a crime. It is rather normal. It is part of the self-centered mood which has its function in self-development. But if a person continues this rebelliousness all through his life, if he persists in looking upon the world as if it were a conspiracy against him, if he always is complaining of how cruel life is, how people are not to be trusted, how everybody is trying to get the better of him, he indicates that he has not outgrown his childish petulance. Joseph completes his sentence saying, "You have planned evil against me but God has turned it into good. You sold me into slavery and I rose to a position where I could feed the hungry." That which we thought was evil frequently turns out to be good and often that which we thought of as good turns out to be evil. The world is not leagued against us. It is a series of events through which we must live courageously.

The mature life does not complain about the world. It knows that experiences will vary from bitter to sweet and from sweet to bitter. It learns to take things as they come. A grown-up soul does not whine about the unfairness of the world. A calm acceptance of the events of life is the ultimate evidence of maturity.

We can understand why human institutions fre-

quently fail of achieving their finest hopes. Institutions are maintained by groups, and groups live by the mental maturity of their members. Individuals apparently quite cultured, reveal their immaturities when they are in a group. The French thinker Le Bon, noticed this phenomenon in the French Chamber of Deputies. He found that the members of the Chamber of Deputies most of whom showed mental graciousness when seen as individuals, would, when they came together, reveal astounding vengefulness, selfishness, and mutual suspicion. Their mental age was lower as a group than as individuals. When put to the test of their being able to cooperate with their fellowmen, the most learned individuals often show surprising childishness and fall short in the social test of maturity. The true extent to which our mind has kept pace with our bodily growth is tellingly revealed whenever we are confronted with the necessity for human cooperation. No man is ever completely mature. No man outgrows every element of childishness within him. Some of us are eternally sensitive, afraid of being hurt, constantly wounded by chance words. Others of us have the youthful dream of dominance. We yearn to tyrannize. We insist upon being noticed every moment of our life. Some of us still utter the childish complaint, "Life is unfair, the world conspires against me." But those individuals whose minds have kept pace with their bodies are blessed with a tolerant spirit. They waste no time bothering with trivial slights and ancient quarrels. They seek no lordship over their fellowmen,

but desire equality and cooperation. They have learned to take the world calmly and without complaint. Such are the mature souls who are the strong pillars of every social structure. They are the builders of civilization.

THE DEATHLESS GENIUS OF THE SUCCAH

by

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THE DEATHLESS GENIUS OF THE SUCCAH

by

PHILIP A. LANGH

At this time I find a most beautiful quotation spoken in the picturesque language of our sages: "Says Rabbi Chanina: The Messiah will come only to teach the peoples of the world the duty of the Succah; after that he will go away."

The saying is very strange. Just what did our sages mean by it? Why is the Succah so important as to render necessary the coming of the Messiah? The "Messiah" means the ideal state of mankind. What is the connection between that state of humanity and the Succah?

A little reflection on our part, however, will convince us of the importance of the Succah. The Succah is a symbol of those things in life, which, to the appearance at least are very weak, but which in reality, are more powerful than anything else in life.

WHAT IS THE SUCCAH?

The Succah is a frail hut. It is a temporary abode. It is builded, not out of stone and steel, such things as our houses are made of. Its four walls are of wood. Its covering is mere foliage. The whole thing is not attached to the ground permanently. A strong wind can come and blow it over.

Every time you leave your home builded out of solid mortar and brick, and go down and enter our little Succah, with its walls of wood, its ceiling of green, you come to realize the values of life such as they really are.

It is there that you understand as you have never understood it before, that those things, apparently solid, upon which rests the structure of our physical civilization, namely, stones and steel, steam and machines and force, things upon which we place our trust, are not really enduring and abiding at all.

Look at the gigantic structures of stone reared by the ancient empires, what has become of them? What has become of the Coliseum at Rome, of the Acropolis at Athens, yes, of the Sphinx and Pyramids of Egypt? They are mere piles of stone, utterly dead, dead relics of civilizations that are gone. The Succah, however, is still here, alive, symbol of a living people.

At this time particularly, at the end of these tragic years, when we have seen a pathetic upheaval of our civilization, when the rich of yesterday have become the poor of today, yes and the poor of today may yet become the rich of the morrow, it is now particularly that we see the vanity of force, power, and riches.

And every time you go down into the Succah, and stand in that little hut, where through the green foliage you feel the warm rays of the sun, and you can hear the rustle of the leaves, and at night time behold the stars that stud the heavens, if you have ears that can hear, you will hear a voice speaking to you, saying:

"Men and women of the twentieth century, you who believe in power, in force, and riches, listen to me, I am the Succah. I am the Spirit of Israel. I am frail yet I am strong. I am torn down yet I am builded up again. I am temporary yet I am abiding. 'For strong as death is love.' I am the Spirit of Israel."

You speak to me and say: "Rabbi, I do not believe that. More powerful than all the Succahs in the world is the Empire State Building." My word to you is, the verdict of history is otherwise. The Empire State Building is very tall. It rises a hundred stories above the sidewalks of New York, a thousand feet over the street.

Yet long after the Empire State Building and all other skyscrapers of our restless American cities shall have become a subject for antiquarians only, and shall have become a thing of the past, even then, rising fresh as ever, will be the Succah.

For the genius of the Succah is its independence of material needs. The Talmud tells us that some ancient rabbis who happened to be aboard a ship during the Festival of Succoth, finding no other space available, climbed atop the mast, and erected there their little Succah.

But you are not yet satisfied. You say that God is on the side of the greater armies, and that might makes right. Let me quote you a contemporaneous example. Over in British India there live a multitude of human beings. All of the three hundred million men, women, and children of India's teeming population are power-

less against the force and might of Britain's power. Its force is not equal to that of Britain.

But there is one inspired man whose name is Mahatma Gandhi, and his spirit is stronger than all of Britain's massed bayonets. He does not oppose force against force.

He says to his people: "My friends, do not fight. Just passive non-resistance." And the spirit of that one man will win over Great Britain's gigantic battleships, and against the massed bayonets of its army.

And so it is good to go down to the little Succah and to listen to its message so true. "Not by might nor by power, but by My spirit." Says The Shrieck Chi

The meaning of the Succah has particular significance to the men and women who frequent a Synagog. It is important enough to have a beautiful synagog, a sacred Temple of worship. Of course we want that. But infinitely more important than the beauty of the edifice is the spirit of the men and women who worship within its walls. Will you worshippers give of your spirit, of your love, yes of your sacrifice, sacrifice of time, of labor, of money? That, ultimately, is the true proof of your professed religion.

You ask now what is the connection between the coming of the Messiah and the meaning of the Succah, as contained in the saying with which we began? The answer is simple.

When the time shall have arrived when we have learned the futility of force, when the peoples of the world shall have learned the meaning of the Succah,

the helplessness of armies and the importance of navies, when they shall have learned to build a civilization upon just human ideals, then indeed, a new civilization shall have arrived—then, indeed will be the time "for the Messiah to come."

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THE SUCCOH — A VISION OF GOD

by

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סוכה שהיא גבוהה למעלה
מעשרים אמה פסולה [Suc. 2A]

The Succoh and particularly the סכך its roof, symbolize our vision of the Invisible, our conception of the Inconceivable, what we see when we look up towards Heaven, when the yearning human soul reaches out to its Maker in its eternal quest for freedom from the shackles of the pitiless "Present". So much depends on that vision! It can raise us from the morass of workaday commonplaces into the rarified atmosphere of high ideals. It can transform the slave into a master, the beggar into a king, the leper into a healer. Conversely, man can be stultified by his conception of the "Divine". Idolatry is but an abortive attempt of the limited human mind to grasp the mysteries of life and give them a concrete form.

"They that make them shall be like unto them" כמוהם יהיו עושיהם (Ps. 115.8) limited, sticking to the ground, idealizing the real, what *is,* instead of attempting to realize the ideal, what *should* be.

Such is the Succoh, the vision of God, which is too low, when man must stoop down to enter it, to lower his inherent dignity by the unconscious emulation of his "lower than himself" God. That was the difference

between Pharaoh's "weltanschauung" and that of Jacob, as the Rabbis point out in their pithy way:

"He (Pharaoh) was standing above his God," [Gen. 41.1] עמד על היאר while of Jacob it is written: והנה ד' נצב עליו [Gen. 28.13] that God was standing above him. Idolatry in its primitive form is largely gone from our midst. And while it is still found in some shape or manner even among modern nations, vid, especially, the attempts to revive it with its ancient cult in Germany, the rabbis considered the יצר הרע of עבודה זרה, the passion for idolatry, as disappearing from the hearts of men. (Yoma 69.)

Instead, there arose a new danger to the true vision of God. Freed from the fetish, animalistic and even anthropomorphic conceptions of God, the human mind has steadfastly risen on the wings of its own speculations to the dizzy heights of an ethereal Deism, where God has been variously pictured as the Logos, the Cosmic Force, the Supreme Mathematician, etc, etc.

We have pushed our Succoh high up, far removed from the sods of earthliness. In the unbridled flight of our imagination, we have lost sight of the ground on which we live and in which we are rooted. We built our Succoh too high, higher than twenty cubits. Our vision of God has transcended the limits of human interests to become the toy of scientific playboys. Such a Succoh is also פסולה, useless and untrue.

Why such a Succoh is ritually unfit is explained by

the rabbis in the Talmudic discussion following the Mishnah. The reasons why we should have at all a Succoh give the eo ipso reason against too high a Succoh. Thus we, too, can best counter the protesting voices in favor of the "high Succoh," by inquiring, why have a Succoh at all? Why did Providence show His חיבה יתירה His extraordinary love to humans by permitting them a glimpse of Himself? Why do we have a belief in God altogether?

More than we desire to see God, we desire to be seen by Him. We need His everwatchful eyes and ears to see our acts and to hear our words. "Know what is above you, an eye that sees, an ear that hears and you will not sin." The great teacher, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zaccai could find no greater blessing to bestow upon his pupils before his death than to impress upon them the fear of God who can see everything.

יהי רצון שתהא מורא שמים עליכם כמורא בשר ודם

"Would that you fear God as you fear man" he prayed. And when the pupils asked in surprise, "Is that all that our fear of the Lord should be?" the great teacher was quick to retort: "Does not one, when committing a crime say, I hope no man saw me?" (Ber. 28b.) Our greatest protection against sinning is the realization that the Ommiscient sees and hears everything. Whether we are in the darkness of the night or in the loneliness of the desert, God watches us and we cannot hide before Him. We can hold no secret thoughts in our minds, harbor no feelings in our hearts that are not revealed

at once to God. This belief in the עין רואה in the השגחה פרטית is the cornerstone of Jewish creed and Jewish life. If we place our conception of God on so high an intellectual pedestal that we cannot believe that He can see us, then that conception is wrong, un-Jewish and futile. The Supreme Mathematician who is blind is not the God of the Jews.

In the words of the Halachah a Succoh that is higher than twenty cubits, is פסולה because as Rabah puts it: דלא שלטא בה עינא (Suc. 2a), the cardinal factor of the Seeing Eye is missing from it. And wherefore have a Succoh at all? Why do we need the conception of God? למען ידעו דורותיכם "that your generations may know," (Lev. 23.4) may be ever conscious of His watchful presence.

Rabbi Zeira points out another consideration that invalidates a Succoh that is too high. Human happiness is a great concern to our Heavenly Father, and so He gave us faith in Him to make us happier. Fear of God is an acquired and cultivated trait in man, but faith in Him is a heavenly gift, which, unless we forfeit it by our own foibles, accompanies us from the cradle to the grave. This faith steels our muscles and steadies our nerves in the bleak hours of dark despair when everything seems to have turned against us.

> "The Lord is for me; I will not fear. What can man do unto me?" (Ps. 118.6).

is the triumphant hosanna that thrills our hearts and

revitalizes our courage and makes us start life anew. Like a father watching over his children, like a shepherd guarding his flock, like a watchman protecting his vineyard, is the Lord to His faithful children. It is the same faith that protects us at the other extreme of human experience. Just as in dire poverty, excruciating pain, or frightful disappointment we might lose our equilibrium, just so too much wealth, exuberant vigor and unbounded success may cause us to lose our balance. While in the first case it is towards despondency and despair, in the latter it is towards wanton recklessness, prodigal follies, and stupid self-conceit that we direct our faltering steps thereby bringing on self-destruction. Only a vigorous and sustained faith in Divine Providence can save us from the pitfalls lurking behind these extremes in our lives.

It is, therefore, more important for us to know the conceivable about God, that He is רחום וחנון, merciful and kind, the dispenser of bounties, than to attempt to know the inconceivable, *what* God is. It is this knowledge of God's providential care that makes our "Gottesschau" a cornucopia of blessings to us. But when we permit our conception of God to evaporate into a lofty nothingness that cannot be troubled by such small things as the prayers of human hearts, the sufferings of human atoms, the doings of the little moving specks on the smallest of the myriads of scintillating stars, then of what avail our tantalising glimpse of the Infinite?

וסוכה תהיה לצל יומם מחרב, ולמחסה ולמסתור מזרם וממטר

"And the Succoh shall be for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a refuge and for a covert from storm and from rain." (Is. 4. 6). In the Halachah this verse, according to Rabbi Zeira, is the source of the Mishnaic law against a Succoh that is higher than twenty cubits. For when the Succoh is built that high one does not sit any more in the shade of the סכך the roof, but in the shadow of the wall. Thus the Succoh, the vision of God, becomes untrue when too high, when it makes us see God as a being too lofty to offer us the solace of His protection from the tempests and rains in days of misery and suffering, and too high to protect us from the ill-effects of too much sunshine, of too much prosperity. The Cosmic Force that has no heart is not the God of the Jews. To us God is a protecting shelter in all vicissitudes of life.

It is, however, in Rovo's explanation that we find the most plausible reason against a Succoh that is too high. "Up to twenty cubits one makes a temporary abode, but when he builds it higher he considers it permanent." (Suc. 2a.) And did not the Torah command us to leave our permanent abodes and dwell in a Succoh, in a temporary dwelling for seven days? Therein lies the essential symbolism of the booth. It is an object lesson to us that we may realize how ephemeral our existence on earth is. Seven days are the seven decades that are allotted to man on this "isthmus betwixt the two Eternities." This life is but the entrance hall to the Palace of Eternity. Here we prepare ourselves for the life of eternal bliss. "Thou shalt

know before whom thou shalt give an accounting of yourself." This belief in the יום הדין in the Day of Judgment, in God who will judge us for reward or for punishment is the mainspring of our belief in the survival of our souls, of Life eternal. "In the Great Beyond there is no eating or drinking, but the righteous sit and enjoy the Divine Presence." (Ber. 17a.) The reality of the Divine Presence gives reality to the soul living on after death. But when we accept Deism, when we build our Succoh too high, intellectually, then it appears we consider *this* life the real and permanent abode of our soul, and that death ends it all.

Surely, a God who cares naught about our welfare in this life cares still less what happens to us after death. And when our belief in the Almighty does not hold out for us the hope of a life eternal, where the Shechina embraces the soul, the "Divine part of man," the חלק אלוה ממעל then what meaning can there be to our belief in the survival of our souls? And if death puts the period after our lives—of what value and meaning is a belief in God?

> "If I look for the nether-world as my house . . .
> If I have said to corruption: 'Thou art my father,'
> To the worm: 'Thou art my mother, and my sister,'
> Where then is my hope?
> And as for my hope, who shall see it?"
> (Job, 17:14, 15)

Thus if the Succoh, our belief in God fails to convey to us the notion that this life is only דירת עראי a tempo-

rary home, and that life after death is our דירת קבע the permanent home of our souls, then that Succoh is פסולה ritually unfit even as the belief it symbolizes is un-Jewish because it is untrue.

Each year we are commanded to build a Succoh. Thus every year we ought to examine and, if necessary, reconstruct our view of God to make sure that it is and remains Jewish. It is true that there is no uniformity possible in this conception of the Deity. It is the one intellectual task that should be undertaken individually by the one who is חכם ומבין מדעתו "wise and capable of grasping the problem." (Hag. 11b.) And even then rarely if ever are exactly the same conclusions reached. קול ד' בכח For God has spoken in strength, relative to the receptive faculty of man. בכחו לא נאמר Not in *His* absolute voice but בכחן של כל אחד ואחד to each man according to his abilities. (Yal. Ps. 29.)

There are many factors that condition our apperceptiveness and thus attune us to varying conceptions of the Godhead. But the Succoh teaches us that there are definite criteria that mark a truly Jewish vision of God in spite of other variations. It must include the omniscience of the Deity, His omnipotence, and must be also synchronous with the belief in the deathlessness of the soul. Then it is the Jewish view par excellence.

It is customary to start building the Succoh the night of Yom Kippur. Purified and ennobled by the chas-

tisement of body and soul we are in a proper mood to build also the Succoh of our "Gottesschau." Then our minds are clearer, our hearts purer, the pure metal of our thoughts unalloyed by the dross of base desires and we may hope to build our Succoh in accordance with the sacred traditions, to recapture the vision of the God of an Abraham, Isaac and a Jacob, Amen.

CHANUKAH

And it came to pass on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, that is Kislev, in the year one hundred and forty-eight . . . and they celebrated the dedication of the altar eight days, and they sacrificed burnt offerings and praise offerings as they rejoiced.

And Judah and his brothers and the assemblage of Israel ordained that the dedication of the altar be celebrated on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Kislev each year for a period of eight days by means of praises and thanks to God.

Book of Maccabees I, 4:51-57

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FEAR AND FAITH

by

LOUIS D. GROSS

The Overture

Judas Maccabeus was the George Washington, the Garibaldi, the William Tell of Judea, the hero of Israel, who some twenty-two centuries ago with his handful of intrepid Jewish warriors beat back the onslaught of the hosts of darkness, saved the world from savage paganism and made the world safe for religion, for the religion of truth, light and love. It is in commemoration of the exploits of that Judas that we celebrate the festival known as Chanukah, Feast of Light, and it is in tribute to that same Judas Maccabeus that Handel produced his great inspirational masterpiece. The thought of this sermon is in accord with the strains of that music in four parts representing the progressive stages in the story of the Maccabees: Fear, Struggle, Courage and the Victory of Faith.

Preceding all, is the overture giving us the sequence and trend of the whole story and depicting these four things that make up life: Fear, Struggle, Courage and Faith. These are the elements that enter into the making of human character. They are in the nature of things, they are found in the texture of the universe,

Note: The above sermon is based upon Handel's immortal oratorio of Judas Maccabeus and therefore slightly different in technique from the accepted form of sermon.

they constitute the soul of man. The overture sums it all up in the thought it suggests to us that life is a battle between fear and faith. A mighty force is fear, but mighty also is faith. Which shall win? We can tell the answer to ourselves as we hearken to the overture of Handel's glorious music.

FEAR

The enemy of man is Fear. The story is told of the poet Shelley that he had a dream in which he was continually pursued and thwarted by a strange man whose face was veiled. He made a fortune and the stranger took it from him. He achieved fame and the stranger turned it to disgrace. The veiled figure frightened him in his bed, spoiled the taste of his food at the table, abashed him in company, and disturbed him in his solitude. At last he fell in love with a rare and divine girl; the stranger disappeared. The poet's wooing prospered. They were to be united in wedlock, they approached the altar; when the priest was about to speak the word that should consummate his happiness, suddenly the veiled figure appeared and cried: "I forbid the banns!" "Who are you?" demanded the wretched bridegroom, and springing forward tore the veil from the man's face. Then with a cry of anguish he fell, seemingly lifeless, and awoke trembling from his dream. For he saw that the face of the man was the face of himself!

Such is fear that congeals the free flow of human energy, paralyzes our best intentions, makes us tongue-

tied, conjures up ghosts out of nothing and causes us to flee away from shadows, makes us afraid of ourselves. But, if in us is the spirit of strength, if in us is the light of truth, then no darkness, no evil can affront us, and fear cannot assail us, it cannot harm, it shall not touch us, it must slink away defeated like the grovelling, treacherous thing that it is.

But once upon a time the Jews were afraid and for them the face of the earth was darkened. A terrible danger threatened, a great colossus with gleaming eyes drew upon them from out of the darkness, it was the colossus called the Syrian champion of Pagan Brutishness, who now with his tremendous hordes and flaming weapons swooped down upon the Holy City determined to devour it. Never would the Jews untrained as they were in the ways of war, go forth to face such a formidable foe and conquer. It was impossible. And so they were sore afraid and cried out in their terror: "For Zion Make Lamentation." It was the lamentation of fear, for already in their mind's eye they saw Zion destroyed, and they prayed: "Hear us, O Lord." It was the prayer of distress, it was the plea of those who trembled like leaves swayed by the wind, just as Handel pictures it in his oratorio.

STRUGGLE

Life itself is struggle. Existence is a battle and we are all of us Soldiers of Life. Only the few triumph and the many falter and fail because they are victims of that dread enemy of man called Fear. But struggle

is necessarily the essence of life. From the first moment in the cradle to our last day we are called upon to meet friction, to face tests, to solve problems, to cut and carve our way through a tangled forest of ills and trials and disillusionments. This is the law of Nature, this is the law of our being, even as the little blade of grass must strive and push its way up through the clod to reach the sunlight, so too for us life is growth, unfolding, development, but there can be no development, no growth, not even life without friction, without effort. Not the struggle that is called economic, for the winning of bread and butter—that is the least of life's battle. Any normal man can somehow find food, clothing, shelter. But the struggle is not for that, primarily it is for the achieving of Self, for the winning of our own Soul. Many a man finds more food, more clothing and shelter than he can ever use, more than is good for him, he may even be a millionaire and yet fail in his battle of existence. I have to laugh at some millionaires who pat themselves on the back and think they have won a great victory in life. To me they seem like comic strips, caricatures of the truth of existence. They have money and oh how we, you and I, poor souls, how we worship them, and run after them and shine their shoes. But they haven't that which is the only thing worth running after, that which no money can purchase, majestic strength of character, sublimity of spirit, which is the object of the struggle of life.

And that was the object of the struggle of our fathers,

of the Jews in those days of the Maccabees. It was a battle royal between the forces of good and the forces of evil, between truth and falsehood, between light and darkness, between civilization and savagery. And that same battle goes on today, goes on in ourselves and in our contacts with our fellowmen. As when someone, by sheer brute force tries to impose his own opinion upon us, or becomes insulting or churlish or threatening when he finds that ours is a different faith than his, and if in us is fear, if we are afraid to stand our ground and permit ourselves to be browbeaten, then we are whipped and we lose. Just as there are some Jews who are afraid, are ashamed to be Jews, afraid because of what they know not, ashamed because they are the ignorant victims of pagan prejudice.

So with our fathers. Theirs was a desperate plight. It looked as though they must lose. The enemy was closing in upon them. He was about to strike the final crushing blow, and then, as often when a man fights with his back to the wall, something happened. Those struggling Jews discovered that in them were hidden powers they had not suspected, and those hidden powers were made vocal in the summons which now stirred their souls: "ARM, ARM YE BRAVE," as we can hear in the oratorio.

COURAGE

And so in the battle between fear and faith, between justice and iniquity, knowledge and ignorance, brute might and spiritual power, in this battle of existence

we see first of all the need to root out the inertia of fear itself, the fear of shadows that haunt us, the fear of nameless ghosts, the fear of ourselves. Second, we have learned the need for the capacity to struggle, for the will to strive ceaselessly against the things that degrade and drag us down. And third, there is needed that weapon which sustains us in the struggle, that which is life's indispensable requisite and the secret of personality, the quality we call courage; not brute courage, not the blind fury of the wild beast; not the headlong, unthinking drive of desperation, but moral courage, spiritual strength, the only kind of strength that is irresistible, because it is of the spirit. Moral courage is the one vital thing that we all tremendously need; courage to recognize and accept the truth when it hurts; courage to confess we are in the wrong when convinced of our mistake; courage to stick to our honest convictions and defend them though attacked by ten thousand hosts.

We are such moral cowards in this battle of existence and in our ordinary daily intercourse with one another. Cravenly we keep quiet when bravely we ought to speak out, and again we speak out in order to cover up our confusion when, shown the error of our ways, we ought wisely to keep silent. And the worst of all moral cowards, are those Jews who are afraid to be Jews. Well, if to be a Jew is something fearful, if it be a sin, then be sure your sin will find you out. No use trying to hide yourself, to Hellenize and assimilate yourself; your own race consciousness will pursue

you and find you and proclaim you if to no one else than to yourself.

Afraid of what? Prejudice? To be afraid is to invite prejudice. Afraid because we of Israel are such a minority? But God and one are always a majority; and remember, brute, material strength of numbers alone never wins out in the struggle of life. Smallest people on the face of the earth yet throughout history Israel has met and withstood every foe that assailed him, that is, the foes from without. They are easy. But the most dangerous enemies are those from within, the things that stultify the integrity of our Jewish spirit, the things that make us weak-kneed, wavering, faltering in our allegiance to the faith that should abide in our souls. To every Jew who needs to have it said, I say Courage, the courage of your convictions. To a fellow man on the bed of sickness I say likewise as I go on my rounds, Courage my friend, the spiritual is mightier than the physical. To every young man and every young woman who dream beautiful dreams and start out in life cherishing ideals, I say again, Courage! Dare to hold on to your ideals and your dreams, especially then when the hard cold practical demands of existence attack the fortress of your faith.

Even as in the days of our Maccabean forefathers when at the height of their fierce struggle against the Syrian foe they faltered and would have fallen back defeated, at that crucial moment there came to them the discovery of hidden powers, unsuspected resources such as there are in all of us, the slumbering giant

power of the spiritual and they heard the call to courage; "Sound an Alarm," the alarm summons of the soul, the summons to renewed combat, to rise to the full stature of manhood, to fight against every evil and if need be to die fighting for truth and justice, even as we can discern in Handel's "Sound an Alarm."

FAITH

Then came the victory, glorious victory of faith over fear, for faith proved to be the most powerful of all weapons; before it, fear slunk away like a whipped cur, the darkness was lifted and courage stood crowned with faith triumphant. And you know the rest of the story, how the Maccabees few in number fell upon and routed the mighty enemy, then returned with singing and rejoicing to the Holy City, and kindled anew the lamps of the sanctuary. That was their first act after the victory, to light the sacred lights. For us that act has a special significance. Faith is the basis of life, but not the faith of fanaticism, not the faith of ignorance which intolerantly and blatantly refuses to see any merit in the honest convictions of others.

Of what earthly good do you suppose that questionnaire can be which ran recently in a certain newspaper asking people to say Yes or No to such questions as "Do you believe in God?" "Do you believe in immortality?" and so forth. You can't give a categorical yes or no to such questions. God—Who? You mean the God who ungodlike consigns sinners to a lake of everlasting fire? If that be God, I say no, I don't be-

lieve in God. Do you mean the God of sectarianism who won't let anybody into Heaven unless he comes labelled with Methodism or Baptism or reform or orthodox Judaism, or some other ism? Then I say no, I don't believe in God. But do you mean God who is the Supreme Intelligent guiding, unifying Power of the Universe, God who is in man, who is the Law of Life, the God of Struggle, of Courage, of Light and Hope and Faith, the one God of all mankind, the Universal Father in whose name those brave Maccabeean Jews fought and gladly gave their lives? To that I say yes, I do believe, with all my heart and soul believe in God.

And so I for one cannot answer that questionnaire on religious faith as it stands, inaptly phrased. For to me faith must be trestled on enlightenment, it must be a thinking, intelligent faith, or it is worthless. It is because there is so much of unthinking, unintelligent faith in the world that there is eternally so much of strife, bloodshed, bigotry and prejudice among men. And so long as that sort of so-called faith exists there will always be fear in the hearts of men, always the call to struggle, always the need of courage, always the soul's summons to the faith of spiritual enlightenment from which alone can come peace. For in such a struggle when victory comes it descends like a white dove with the olive leaf of peace in its mouth. Then the stars and planets, worlds beyond worlds and all nature will rise up to sing with the chorus of mankind the Song of Victory even as the great artist in his oratorio intones it: "O, Lovely Peace, O Blessed Peace."

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WHEN CIVILIZATIONS CLASH—THEN AND NOW

by

LOUIS L. MANN

Joy and sorrow, hope and despair, victory and defeat, in fact, all extremes in the life of an individual or of a people are apt to call forth expressions of its truest self. Freudian psychology would describe this phenomenon in terms of "the censor being off guard." Such expressions elicited by memorable historic events, have become classic among all peoples and in all literatures. Our Chanukkah celebration, which forms just such a link in the historic consciousness of the Jewish people, offers no exception to this rule. Then it was that the true self, the spiritual note, and the high religious resolve of Judaism asserted itself in no uncertain terms. The Syrian-Greek world attempted to de-Judaize the Jew and to paganize the religious people par excellence. The stirring and inspiring words of the one hundred and eighteenth Psalm voiced the depth of Jewish idealism, "I shall not die but live to declare the deeds of the Lord."

Beginning twenty-six hundred years ago the position of the land of Palestine was comparable to that of a coin among gamblers passing from one hand to another. It was not unlike the uncertainty of a pawn in a game of chess. It was the buffer state of nations. Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Macedonia, Egypt, and Syria, each in

turn, when it was victorious, took possession of it. Babylon gave Israel freedom of worship; Cyrus the King of Persia, was so kind to the Jews and so anxious to help rebuild the Temple that Nebuccadnezzar had destroyed, that he was hailed as a Messiah. Alexander of Macedon, in his conquest of the world, was known for his tolerance toward other religions. Though Judea was a vassal state for four centuries, the Jew lived in comparative religious freedom.

About twenty-one hundred years ago Antiochus IV became King of Syria. Syria, at that time, ruled over Palestine; Syria was dominated by decadent Greek thought and practice. It is well known that Antiochus was more foolish than cruel, more shrewd than wise, more fool-hardy than courageous, and more eccentric than brutal. Syria was threatened with the growing power of Rome and Antiochus sought to strengthen his kingdom by unifying it. He interpreted unity in terms of uniformity. The Jews had been deprived of political rights, subjected to unjust taxes, yet because their number was small and because they "loved peace and pursued peace," they did not resist. Antiochus, with an uncanny shrewdness, realized what so many Jews in our day do not yet fully appreciate, that what makes a Jew a Jew above all else is his religion. To destroy the Jew, he therefore issued a mandate that the Jews forsake their religion and worship the gods of the heathen. He tried to super-impose one civilization upon another. The unexpected happened. The small, weak, apparently hopeless and helpless minority could

neither be bribed nor threatened, cajoled or coerced. The alternatives that lay before the Jewish people were clear. They could preserve physical life at the cost of spiritual death, or they could attempt to preserve spiritual life at the cost of physical death. It was the first time in history when a war was waged, not for booty or spoils or territory or commercial supremacy, but a war to maintain the integrity of a group's spiritual life. It is almost a contradiction of terms—a war for ideas and ideals!

The scene in Modin was as dramatic as it was unforgetable. Among the "dramatis personae" were Mattathias and his five sons, Apelles, and officers of the King. Because of the prestige and prominence of the priestly family, Mattathias was requested to forsake the religion of his fathers. He was promised power and position. Though an aged man, he planted his feet firmly upon the ground, set his eyes in penetration upon the officers, and with his right hand pointing to Heaven with grave determination, said: "If all the people of the kingdom obey the order of the Monarch to fall away, everyone from the religion of his fathers, yet will I and my sons walk in the covenant of our fathers." The victory of the Maccabees marks one of the great epochs in the history of mankind. It not only saved Judaism but made possible the birth of Christianity and Mohammedanism.

There was much that the Jews might have learned from the Greeks, who excelled in aesthetics and appreciated the laws of beauty, symmetry, harmony, painting,

sculpture, and architecture. They might also have learned something of the methodology of science, in terms of objective approach, classification, generalization, inductive and deductive methods, and the science of logic. The Greeks excelled also in the precision of mathematics, through whose symbolism the step from physics to metaphysics was not a difficult one. The Jew might also have learned the art of formulating philosophical systems in terms of a disinterested quest for truth, in which the Greeks were masters. In the drama also did the Greek excel; he used it as a medium to impart his religious message to the masses. These are but a few of the imperishable Greek contributions to the world that had little influence on the Jew at the time of Antiochus. There were two reasons: the first lay in the attempt to superimpose them by force; the second was due to the fact that the Syrian-Greek world at the time had a decadent form of Hellenism. Professor Cornell, an authority on this phase of history, has said: "With the cultural perfection went hand in hand a moral decay, whose dreadful depths could not be hidden even by the rose that flourished on the edge of the abyss . . . what the average Greek had of civilization was only the moral decay, of culture only the conceited arrogance. It was a moral laxity more repulsive under its varnish of culture than undisguised barbarism and untutored license."

There was much also that the Greeks might have learned from the Jew. Ethical monotheism was one of them—the worship of God through ethical conduct to

man. The beauty of holiness, sanctifying the commonplace was another. The insistence upon free will, making man master of his destiny rather than the puppet of providence, was needed by the Greeks, who believed in an inexorable and inevitable fate. An optimistic outlook toward the future, such as the Jew always possessed, would have been a blessing to the Greek, whose horizon was full of ominous clouds of gloom and foreboding. The dignity of labor, which has always played so large a part in Jewish life, stood in striking contrast to the disgrace in which it was held by Greeks. The glory of womanhood, as exalted in Jewish literature, served as a telling antithesis to the breeding-machine function of woman for purposes of war and the toil of drudgery of the Greeks. The blessing of peace that was the sublime passion of the Jew and the idea that right makes might both formed an unalterable opposition to that type of Hellenism that Antiochus Epiphanes had espoused. The rights of the minority and the power of the few were as significant in Jewish life as they were lacking in Greek practice.

But the Jew did not learn from the Greek nor the Greek from the Jew because their contact came in the form of a conflict. Ideas cannot be superimposed; they are not amenable to physical force. They cannot be exiled, expelled, or deported; they must be met. Interpenetration of ideas, not superimposition, is one of the lessons that Judaism has taught, that civilization has espoused and that paganism has never understood.

This leads quite naturally to another lesson taught

by Chanukkah—the folly, the fallacy, and the futility of force in things of the spirit. Even in the biological world one can witness the fallacy of force. The great monsters of antiquity, like the mastodon, the glyptodon, the dinosaurus, and others would be altogether unknown today were it not for our museums of natural history. Brute force without moral strength is self-destructive and self-annihilating. Suspicion and distrust made for isolation and isolation made for annihilation. Prince Kropotkin, in his book, "Mutual Aid as a Factor in Evolution," has pointed the moral of the fallacy of force in the biological realm. The same is true in the realm of sociology, where neither wife nor children, prisoners nor laborers, respond to force, but will and do react to love.

Christian scholars point out that but for the Maccabean victory Judaism would have disappeared and Christianity and Mohammedanism never would have been born. The early Christian Church observed a Maccabean festival in appreciation of this fact. Owing to the intellectual attainments of the few, the spiritual life of the Greeks has been greatly exaggerated. Intellectual perfection among the Greeks at their best—and remember that Syria had a decadent form of Hellenism—was attained only by a few and even these did not rise to the height of monotheism. The aesthetic religion of the poets included the worship of innumerable gods and goddesses, wise and unwise, moral and immoral. The Homeric gods may be characterized by a crudity and vulgarity that have impressed every reader

of the Illiad. The popular religion of the masses was superstitious, polytheistic, with man-gods and god-men, demigods, and demons. The multiplicity of the gods is referred to even in Plato's "Phaedrus," in the words that "whosoever would disentangle the number of Greeks gods and goddesses would be a laborious but not a very fortunate man." The heroes, the poets, and the kings were deified. This process of the deification of humanity and humanization of the Deity led ultimately to the deification of a man and a Jew, and became the basis of a new religion.

All of this is true not only of poets like Homer and Hesiod, and Herodotus and Pindar, historians, Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, Socrates, and Anaxagoras philosophers, but also of the dramatists, Sophocles, Aeschylus, Euripides, and Aristophanes. Is it necessary to point out that Homer and Hesiod lived at the time of Amos and Hosea; that Isaiah, Micah, and Jeremiah lived before Sophocles, Aeschylus, and Euripides; that Zechariah lived before Aeschylus? It was Zechariah who said, "Not by strength and not by might, but by the spirit of God doth man prevail," and Aeschylus who almost paralleled it, but with this striking contrast: "Not by strength and not by might but by cunning doth man prevail."

The Greek "Weltanschauung" was one in which man and even the gods were governed by an inexorable fate. The gods were not bound up with moral order. Sophocles, in his drama "Oedipus Rex" said that "man is like a fly in a spider's web, the more he tries to get out the

deeper he gets in." Aeschylus in "Prometheus Bound" harps upon the idea that "fate rules the rudder of necessity." Theoginis declared that hope and peril are twin deities, closely related but equally dangerous to men." Pindar speaks of hope as "the dreams of waking men." The verdict of the whole of the Greek drama is that fate can be overcome only by suicide. Suicide, however, represents not conquest but surrender. Compare and contrast to this the Jewish insistence that man can choose and because he can choose he must choose, and that the quality of his choice establishes as well as reveals an insight into his character and personality. About choice itself, there seems to be but little choice. If man chooses not to choose, he has yet chosen—indifference. If he refuses to choose the higher, he has chosen the lower. Jews believed in the paradox that if we are fated, we are fated to be free. "Behold I set before you this day, life and the good, death and the evil, but choose ye—life."

The old Greek looked upon work as a disgrace. In Athens at one time there were only one hundred thousand free men and four hundred thousand slaves. Aristotle defined a slave as "a tool with life," and a tool as "a slave without life." Physical labor was beneath contempt among the cultured Greeks. Compare and contrast this with the greatest of Jewish teachers who earned their living through manual labor and taught without pay in their chosen vocation! Compare and contrast this with the interpretation of the little legend in Genesis to the effect that God himself worked

six days in order to dignify and sanctify labor. The Greek concept of labor widened the breach and deepened the chasm between man and his fellowman. The Jewish concept, though figurative and anthropomorphic, picturing God himself as a worker, made of every worker "a co-worker with God in the divine process of creation."

The Maccabean victory brought into the open the issue of religious liberty with a dramatic effect. The whole history of religious liberty, which runs like a golden thread through the annals of bigotry and fanaticism and paganism, seems to go back for its inspiration to the days of the Maccabees. What John Milton, George Fox, John Locke, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, John Stewart Mill, the Pilgrim fathers, Roger Williams, Thomas Jefferson, Lord Baltimore, William Penn, Asser Levy, Patrick Henry, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin, and the other heroes who have their niche in Religious Liberty's Hall of Fame have done, seems but the flowering and the fruition of Maccabean idealism. Without religious liberty the living are dead. Leaving behind a heritage of religious liberty, the dead live.

The Maccabean victory points in no uncertain terms to the power and the potency of the few. Jews were never as many as the Egyptians, or as powerful as the Babylonians, or as cultured as the Greeks, or as strategic as the Macedonians, or as armed as the Romans; yet Jewish influence is undying and never-ending, because it is a personification of a "will to live," a passion

for righteousness, an exemplification that man lives, "not by strength and not by might, but by the spirit of God."

In these days when Jews have once again been called upon to suffer because of bigotry and fanaticism, the message and the mandate of Maccabean times comes both in the nature of comfort and challenge. Many of the ideas for which the Maccabees were ready to give their last full measure of devotion have again been challenged by a modern Epimanes (mad man). He, too, has put his confidence in brute force, defying the Jewish ideal; "Some put their trust in chariots, and some put their trust in horsemen, but we will put our trust in God." After all these painful years, Hilter has not yet learned the folly and futility of force.

Like Antiochus of old he believes that minorities have no right to live. Jews, liberals and other minorities have been sent to concentration camps humiliated, ostracized, disfranchised, and made to suffer every form of shame and contumely. In his book, "Mein Kampf," he has spoken of womanhood not in terms of valor and chivalry, the queen in the home, the high-priestess at the altar of God, but in terms of a breeding machine, to bring forth cannon fodder for the next war. "Objective truth," said he, "must not be the goal of research and investigation, but propaganda." How the mighty have fallen! Germany, the land of research and scientific investigation, through the words of its morally perverted leader, has forgotten that "truth crushed to earth will rise again!" "Germany," said he,

"must learn to become hard and cruel and hate. Only in this way can she regain her position in the world." What seething sarcasm, what scathing irony, what sardonic humor, were it not so tragic, to have Hitler, nineteen hundred years after a Jew whose name was given to a new era, with degenerate ignominy change his words, "I give unto you a new commandment, that ye *love* one another," into "I give unto you a new commandment, that ye *hate* one another." Nor does he stand alone in prostituting the Christianity that he professes. Goering, one of the Hitlerian triumvirate, has said, "Compared to our leader that little 'Jew boy' that died on the cross pales into insignificance." The Minister of Propaganda has suggested that the Hebrew Bible be displaced by Teutonic myths and that Christianity be changed because it is so largely Jewish. During the last year the courage and heroism of the Maccabees have been found among the Protestant clergy of Germany, who dared defy Hitler to uphold freedom of conscience, who vowed to be true to themselves and the traditions of religious liberty, exalted by the Maccabees and reinterpreted to them by Martin Luther. Regimentation (Gleichschaltung) and totalitarianism will ruin Germany because there is an indomitable, unconquerable, and insuperable something within the soul of man that can neither be threatened nor cajoled, muzzled nor expelled—the still small conscience within the soul of man.

Hitlerism is an attempt to put Nietzscheanism into practice. Frederich Nietzsche despised not only Juda-

ism but Christianity as well. In his volume "So Sprach Zarathustra" he said: "It hath been said unto you 'thou shalt not kill,' 'thou shalt not steal,' and 'thou shalt not bear false witness.' Blessed are the meek, the peace-loving, and the merciful, but I, Frederich Nietzsche say unto you that all that is the quintessence of a slave-morality, the apotheosis of all that is weak, cowardly and ignoble. The genuinely noble knows of no such flabby virtue. Virtue means severity, cruelty, barbarity; these have the shining virtues of the race, before that slave revolt, led by the Jews, had won the day, and these they are destined to become again upon the elimination of that Judeo-Christian episode from the annals of the human race. Then will there be a transvaluation of all values. The blond beast of prey will rage proudly and lustfully over the earth with nothing but his own sweet will to restrain him, who returns from an orgy of murder, incendiarism, torture, with the mental composure as if a mere student's freak had been perpetrated."

Nietzsche and now Hitler hate the Jew because they really hate Christianity and because Judaism is the mother of Christianity. From the Hitlerian point of view the unforgivable sin of the Jew is that he saddled Christianity upon the pagan world and paganism writhes under the conscience which Christianity, through Judaism, brought into an unsuspecting pagan world.

Hitler and his kind hate the Jew not because he contaminates secular literature, but because he is the

author of sacred literature; not because he vulgarizes the stage, but because on the stage as a world, the Jew has acted sublimely; not because the Jew commercialized the world, but because, in reality, he spiritualized life; not because the Jew, in some countries, lives in a narrow cramped Ghetto, but because his spirit has transcended arbitrary, artificial, man-made boundaries between country and country and caught a gleam of the God-made resemblances between man and man; not because the Jew rejected the Messiah, but because the Jew is the Messianic people, despised and rejected of men; not because the Jew forsakes moral standards, but because the Jew creates moral standards totally incompatible with the brute force of paganism, ancient and modern; not that the Jew loves mammon, but because he is devoted to man and nothing human is foreign to him; not that the Jew has a morality of reward, but because, for the Jew, morality is his reward. The world will yet choose between the "blond beast of prey" of Nietzsche, the law of the jungle, and the voice of the prophet announcing the law of God.

Nietzsche himself, a little more honest than Hitler, spoke of the "Judeo-Christian Episode." He linked them together as one and inseparable. The challenge of modern paganism is as dangerous to Christianity—though less outspoken against it—as it is to Judaism. Judaism and Christianity must stand united against their common enemies, hatred, malice, ill will, bigotry, ignorance, fanaticism, war and paganism.

Judaism has been challenged in every generation and

in every age. That challenge now includes Christianity as well. Judaism and Christianity must stand together—or Heaven forfend, fall together—in the face of the recrudescence of paganism.

Jews have outlived Pharaoh, Haman, Torquemada, and the Czars. Jews will outlive Hitler, and with Maccabean heroism, with Maccabean idealism, and the Maccabean spirit of sacrifice, will carry on, because God is in their hearts and the undying fire of righteousness is in their souls.

When they were ridiculed, because they persisted as a minority, they returned the taunt with the supreme "I shall not die but live and declare the deeds of God."

When the tyrant issued his mandate of the divine right of kings, manifested with satanic might toward men, the Jews intoned the words of the Psalmists: "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidences in princes."

When Paganism threatened the Jew with the force of arms, they hurled back their eternal defiance of the spirit: "Not by strength and not by might but by the spirit of God doth man prevail."

When they were ridiculed, because they persisted, as a minority, they returned the taunt with the supreme confidence that, "The stone which the builders rejected will yet become the chief cornerstone."

When at last victory, freedom, and the right to worship God came to them, they joined in chorus, singing: "This is the day which the Lord hath made, let us rejoice and be glad in it."

MODERN HELLENISTS

by

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How tremendous is the difference between the only two festivals of the Jewish year not mentioned in the Pentateuch — Chanukah and Purim, and how the former gains in proportion when contrasted with the holiday commemorating the routing of Haman and his nefarious plans. Unlike their Persian-Jewish brothers, the Jews in Palestine of the Maccabean Era were not content to stand idly by while pinning their entire hopes of salvation upon the entreaties of an Esther or the prayers of a Mordecai. Valiantly and gladly risking their lives they engaged in a combat that was to become historic because of its purity of motive and loftiness of ideal. For this time, it was not Israel's life that was in danger, but rather, its philosophy of life. And the Hasmonean Revolt will ever remain a living testimony to the greatness of a people that fought as valiantly for an abstract, spiritual ideal as do other nations for the tangible and concrete protection of their lives and possessions.

Of particular importance does this fact become upon the realization that approximately at the same era in World History, another old and illustrious people was striving to protect itself against possible onslaught from a dreaded enemy. But its method was vastly different

from that of our people. The Chinese, fearing invasion, began erecting the famous Great Wall of China, at approximately the same time when Mattathias and his five stalwart sons led their handful of people against the powerful armies of Antiochus. For like the Egyptians, who began building their imposing pyramids in the year 3000 B. C. E. the Chinese, too, placed their trust in the invulnerability of stone and therefore built strong walls *around* their people. Not so Judas Maccabeus who, mindful of Zechariah's admonition, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of hosts," built impregnable walls *within* the hearts of his people. Nor was this struggle a simple matter. The odds were by far against him and his adherents. For the Hellenists decried the ruggedness and stern restrictions of the Jewish faith and instead, temptingly offered the graceful, though insidious Greek culture. And greater by far than the actual generalship and bravery in warfare demanded of Judas must have been the Herculean task required to prevail upon a people, many of them untutored and undiscerning, to turn their backs contemptuously upon a sensuous faith that stressed beautiful form, rather than sterling content. Gradually, however, they arrived at the conclusion that the substitution of the treacherously attractive Greek culture for the less glamorous but sober and virile faith of their fathers would spell national and religious suicide.

How aptly Judah Halevi expressed that thought centuries later when he said:

ואל תשיאך חכמת יונית
אשר אין לה פרי כי אם פרחים

"And let not the wisdom of the Greeks beguile thee
Which hath no fruit but only flowers."

II

And once they had perceived the shallowness of their temptation, no consideration or power on earth was able to deter them. Bitterly, they strove against this weakening faith and waged the purest and sincerest war in the annals of mankind; not terrestrial gain, nay, not even personal freedom—spiritual freedom was their goal. They were moved by an inner urge. It was as if they, like their ancestor, Moses, stood before a burning bush receiving a call from God; and unquestioningly, unhesitatingly did they answer that call. Courageously, almost rashly, they flung themselves against the overwhelming Syrian hordes—and won! So inspiring and gripping is this spectacle of valorous sacrifice for an ideal that even a Christian writer is moved to intense admiration. Lazarus, in his "Ethics of Judaism" quotes the following excerpt from E. R. Bevan's "The House of Seleucus":

"There shone out in that intense moment the sterner and sublimer qualities which later Hellenism, and, above all, the Hellenism of Syria, knew nothing of—uncommon fidelity to an ideal, endurance raised to the pitch of utter self-devotion, a passionate clinging to purity. They were qualities for the lack of

which all the riches of Hellenic culture could not compensate. It was an epoch in history."

Moreover, so impressed was later Christendom with the importance of this struggle that in the words of the Christian divine, Cheyne, as quoted by Morris Joseph:

"Both in the East and in the West, August the first was sanctified as the spiritual 'Birthday of the Maccabees'. The story of the Maccabees was, in truth, much more thought of by the Ancient Church than it is by us (i. e. by modern Christians), and we might well be led by this to 'consider our ways and be wise'."

And how simply and tersely the Talmud (Tractate Shabbath 21 B) describes this epochal victory:

מאי חנוכה ? דתנו רבנן : בכ"ה בכסליו יומי דחנוכה תמניא אינן דלא למספד בהון ודלא להתענות בהון. שכשנכנסו יוונים להיכל טמאו כל השמנים שבהיכל, וכשגברה מלכות בית חשמונאי ונצחום, בדקו ולא מצאו אלא פך אחד של שמן שהיה מונח בחותמו של כהן גדול, ולא היה בו אלא להדליק יום אחד, נעשה בו נס והדליקו ממנו שמונה ימים.

לשנת אחרת קבעום ועשאום ימים טובים בהלל והודאה.

"What is the origin of Chanukah? The rabbis have taught: The eight days of Chanukah commence on the twenty-fifth of Kislev. It is not permitted to mourn or fast during that period. For when the Greeks entered the Temple they defiled all the oils, but when the Hasmoneans overpowered them and were victorious they searched and found only one small flask of oil undefiled and still bearing the seal

of the High Priest. It was deemed sufficient for the requirements of one night only, but it miraculously lasted for eight days. The following year they established these days, declaring them a holiday upon which prayers and songs were to be recited."

III

How simple and yet how penetratingly subtle is this brief account. No glorification of heroes, no commemoration of momentous battles. The rededication of the Temple and the miracle of the crucible of oil—these are the factors stressed by our sages. And rightfully so. For by the light of the Maccabees have we studied and dreamed these many years. Infrequently, it flared and lighted our proud path through Europe. More often, by its faint light, we groped furtively from enemy to enemy ostracized, tortured, trampled and spat upon, but ever, it warmed our hearts and flamed our minds. Mere recollection of the Maccabees' heroism has sustained and strengthened us and periodic emulation of their sacrifice and martyrdom enabled us to survive and flourish, to increase in numbers and productivity to the chagrin and dismay of our enemies and, to an extent that enabled us to laugh at logic, which had predicted and decided our death ever so often.

Unfortunately, however, the Hasmonean victory was perhaps not as decisive and lasting as we should like to believe. Nor have we witnessed the complete annihilation of Hellenism in Jewish life. Today perhaps more

han at any other stage in Jewish life, are we suffering rom a weak-mindedness amongst our people that perists in glorifying alien cultures and minimizing the remendous worth of our own. The pitifully small nrollments in our Talmud Torahs and Sunday chools, the unattended Synagogues and Temples, the allous unconcern about Jewish life and learning on he part of the Jewish college youth and the withering ndifference of Jewish parents and the average Jew toward the most vital questions in Jewish life—what else re these but manifestations of a modern Hellenism? And worse still is the twisted attitude of even the soalled communally-conscious Jew who evidences an nterest in Jewish institutions, and who regards his abbi and his congregation as having reached the innacle of perfection when, as he expresses it, "the ervices are so beautiful that I could even invite my Christian friends to attend them."

IV

This constant concern, which already has acquired he proportions of an obsession over the Christian's pinion, the ludicrous attempts to raise every Jewish ctivity to Gentile standards—in other words, a Jewish ife that springs not from an inner need or urge, but s a result of external non-Jewish circumstances and tandards—what else is this but Hellenism? Nor is he "defense mechanism" type of Judaism born of Nazi persecutions and a general wave of anti-Semitism ufficiently sincere and conscious to insure against a

repetition of the deplorable American custom of communities imitating individuals in their catering to Hellenistic tendencies. Communities that possess spiritual leaders, teachers, educational, charitable and social institutions, not because these men and institutions are necessary to fill an urgent need, but rather, as desirable accessories is a general scheme that will elicit approval and a gracious nod from the local Gentile community. These sycophants and grovelers at Christian heels who idealize the non-Jewish only because it is non-Jewish —the modern Jasons and Menelauses exert a pernicious and disintegrating influence upon Jewish life that is proving formidable and devastating. And the Maccabees of today, in order to successfully combat their deadly influence, must be fired by the same unity of purpose and purity of motive that fired the Maccabees of old.

We should remember the Talmudic Law that he who places his Chanukah lights higher than twenty cubits has not fulfilled his duty. And the reason for that, according to the commentators, is that the human eye cannot observe them at that height. And if one were permitted to make a slight change and transpose the letters from אמה meaning cubit, to read מאה meaning century, we might interpret this saying to mean that one who places the story of Chanukah further back than twenty centuries, regarding it as some vague and shadowy incident that transpired in the distant past and having no effect upon our lives today—that person, even though he carries out the perfunctory act of light-

ing the Chanukah candles, has yet failed to fulfill his duty. For despite his observance of the ritual, he has yet missed the entire spirit of the indomitable courage and sacrificing bravery displayed by the Maccabees. And an historical occurrence that cannot be visualized by the mental eye and made vibrantly alive, even though the physical eye may observe and see the tangible symbolism of that occurrence, must of necessity prove very ineffectual and futile.

V

Moreover, during the twenty-one hundred years since that epochal struggle between Judaism and Hellenism, we have become more and more convinced of the importance of the victory achieved by the valiant defenders of our faith. Daily, we have realized the vast superiority of a stern, virile and meaningful religion over a seductive, glamorous but "soft" culture.

We have already quoted Christian opinion regarding the distinctions between Jewish and Greek cultures. One more notable quotation deserves mention. In "Gleanings of Past Years" the famous Premier of England, William Ewart Gladstone, states as follows:

> "But indeed there is no need, in order to obtain a due appreciation of our debt to the ancient Greeks, that we should either forget or disparage the function which was assigned by the Almighty Father to this most favored people. Much profit, says St. Paul, had the Jew in every way. He had the oracles of God:

he had the custody of the promises: he was the steward of the great and fundamental conception of the unity of God, the sole and absolute condition under which the Divine idea could be upheld among men at its just elevation. No poetry, no philosophy, no art of Greece ever embraced, in its most soaring and widest conceptions, that simple law of love towards God and towards our neighbours, on which 'two commandments hang all the law and the prophets,' and which supplied the moral basis of the new dispensation.

There is one history, and that the most touching and most profound of all, for which we should search in vain through all the pages of the classics—I mean the history of the human soul in its relations with its Maker; the history of its sin, and grief, and death, and of the way of its recovery to hope and life and to enduring joy. For the exercises of strength and skill, for the achievements and for the enchantments of wit, of eloquence, or art, of genius, for the imperial games of politics and of war let us seek them on the shores of Greece . . . All the wonders of the Greek civilization heaped together are less wonderful, than the single Book of Psalms."

This, therefore, is the faith for which the heroes of Chanukah struggled and in whose behalf we, today, must wage incessant warfare. Persecutions, oppressions, threats of annihilation—we must face these all, calmly and philosophically. Realizing the full import of the story the simple lights of Chanukah have to re-

late, mindful of the chaos wrought in the minds of individuals, as well as communities by the present-day Hellenists, consciously aware that the race is not necessarily to the swift, but rather to the sincere and courageous, and thoroughly imbued with the truth of the prophecy, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of hosts," we shall emulate the Hasmoneans of old in their unswerving loyalty to the belief in the unity of God and in the definite contribution that the Jewish faith and people can make to the advancement and betterment of mankind. Like those intrepid heroes of old, undismayed by the overwhelming majority of spiritual floaters and joiners, we must and shall remain ever steadfast and true to Israel's faith and fate, culture and philosophy of life. And as in those days our brave and loyal ancestors derived inspiration and courage from the hills and plains of Judaea, so today, we too, shall look for courage and enlightenment to a rebuilt and revivified Israel in our rebuilt and revivified homeland—Palestine.

PURIM

Therefore do the Jews of the villages, that dwell in the unwalled towns, make the fourteenth day of the month Adar a day of gladness and feasting, and a good day, and of sending portions one to another. Wherefore they called these days Purim, after the name of pur . . . and that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed.

Book of Esther 9:19-28

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JEWISH HISTORY AS GRAND OPERA WITH A SENSE OF HUMOR

by

H. RAPHAEL GOLD

"He that sitteth in heaven laugheth, the Lord hath them in derision."

(Psalm 2, Verse 4)

"Coins were struck in honor of Mordecai: on one side of them were engraved sackcloth and ashes, and on the other side a golden crown."

(Bereshith Rabbah, 39)

If you have ever fallen asleep under the influence of the eminently correct but thoroughly monotonous bellowing of an operatic bull of Bashan, do not altogether blame your musical obtuseness. It may be due to the obtuseness of the author of the opera. For grand opera can be very grand and very sublime, but unless it is saved by a grander sense of humor, it will skid on the devil slides of the ridiculous. To be sure, no one will dare to impugn the "grandness" of the Wagnerian Opera, yet its soporific influence is even more notorious than that of the proverbial sermon. Its titanic spirit fairly overwhelms you, thundering as it goes:

"Deutschland, Deutschland ueber alles"

Indeed, if Wagner, genius of grand opera, were also blessed with a grand sense of humor he could not have indulged in his jealousy of Meyerbeer to the extent of

actually publishing that diatribe: "Das Judentum in der Musik."

It is characteristic of a true sense of humor to take both success and defeat with a grain of salt. A smiling objectivity and a saving detachment are the compensation of those who realize that the genuine currency of life is that of Mordecai: "Sackcloth and ashes on one side, and a golden crown on the other." The Jewish people has accepted much of this currency of destiny, allowing neither the wine of success to go to their head, nor the hemlock of failure to go to their feet. . . .

Thus the character of both the Jewish individual and of Jewish History has been saved from becoming morose: first, those who suffer from a bad stomach, and second, those who are bothered with a bad conscience. A good Kosher diet helps to eliminate the first cause, and the consciousness of being a "Nirdof" (the persecuted) minimizes the other. Thus we find an explanation for that paradox of history that the sons of the most oppressed people in the world should be the world's leading entertainers and comedians. Here we may also find the explanation for the miraculous escape of the Jewish people from insanity on an epidemic scale. In spite of such predisposing factors as (1) enforced urbanization, (2) close inbreeding, and (3) continuous political tension, the Jewish people are authoritatively reported to have a "lower rate of first admissions to hospitals for mental diseases than non-Jews."* Insanity and a sense of humor are evidently

*Note: Benj. Maltzberg: "On Prevalence of Mental Disease Among Jews: 'Mental Hygiene'."

not very compatible, for otherwise the crushing tragedies of Israel would have long ago converted our Grand Opera into an endless series of "Mad Scenes." . . .

Sonorously Leopold Zunz speaks of our aristocracy of suffering. "If there are ranks in suffering, then," he says, "Israel takes precedence over all nations. If the duration of sorrows, and the patience with which they are borne ennoble, the Jews can challenge the aristocracy of every land. If a literature is called rich in the possession of a few classic tragedies, what shall we say of a national tragedy lasting for fifteen hundred years in which the poets and actors were also the heroes." Jewish History is thus conceived as a grand opera: colorful, heroic, deeply religious, and saturated with struggle and tragedy. However, good old Zunz might have added, that what saved our history from becoming "a slaughter-house grand opera" is its all-pervading sense of humor.

The Hebrew Psalmists and Prophets were among the first to conceive the drama of life as a Divine Comedy. In the original classic sense "comedy" is merely a play with a happy ending. The Prophet of Israel kept his tear-dimmed eye riveted on the rainbow of the future: "And it shall come to pass in the end of days" . . . that there really will be happy days. Meanwhile, says the Psalmist: "He that dwelleth above laugheth, the Lord hath them in derision". Surely, there must be "comic relief" even for Divine patience, for otherwise how could He endure ("kavayochol") the arrogance

of the successful, and the self-righteousness of the respectable. . . .

And it is this sardonic laughter which rolls through the long dark corridors of Jewish History, drowning out the jubilant cries of oppressor and marauder. Even though the enemy deprived us of material weapons, so that "not a shield, or a spear are seen among the forty thousand of Israel," yet we wielded the far more invincible weapons of the mind. The knout of the Cossack was not our instrument of punishment. Instead, we chastised our enemy with the stinging whip of satire. A significant Agada relates that when Haman set forth to execute his bloody design, the Jewish school children of Shushan threatened to pierce him by a mass attack of their pens. The offspring of those children are still very prominent among the satirists of world literature. And when a modern pompous Haman "says in his heart: whom would the king delight to honor beside myself?" an adroit Jewish pen often punctures the windbag, and much is added to the gaiety of nations.

Thus a mirthful melody often garnishes the overtures of that Grand Opera of Jewish History. The life of the Ghetto was hard, but not always sombre. The walls of the Ghetto were thick, but not half as thick as the heads of those who devised them. For the spirit of Israel refused to be immured. It caused the walls to crack, not to mention the faces. . . . Behold this delightful bit of Ghetto folk-lore: Once there was a petty king in medieval "Naziland" who was indifferent to

the Jews, but whose favorite courtier was their implacable enemy. The Jews dubbed the latter "Haman". When the courtier heard of this unsavory name he caused the king to issue a decree that whoever dared to call him Haman, would be thrown into a dungeon. Whereupon the Jews of the kingdom decided to call their enemy by the name of "Amalek". The courtier explained to the king that Amalek was the progenitor of Haman, and promptly the decree was amended to include Amalek. The Jews bethought themselves then to call him "Zachor". The learned courtier explained to the king that Zachor was the first word of the Biblical injunction of the war against Amalek. (Deuteronomy 25.) The decree was then extended to embrace the use of "Zachor". However, this did not exhaust the inventiveness of the Ghetto satirists. They referred to their enemy by a little fragment of melody with which the reader of the Torah cantillates the word "Zachor". When the courtier then besought the king to prohibit even that melody, the king's patience gave way, and he cried: "this is beyond my control! Indeed, there are too many variations to a Hebrew Melody." . . .

Thus, the grand old Opera of Jewish history goes on: tragic arias and tearful elegies alternating with rollicking scherzos. It is heartening to remember that while many an ancient contemporary already played its recessional, the Jewish processional still continues. Behold, Susa of ancient Persia sleeps forgotten under a heavy quilt of ashes. But rejuvenated Zion is again

alive with the surging energy of her children. Let us go back then and draw new inspiration from the ever-true Megillah. Yea, let us join in the good old refrain:

"Today is Purim
Soon the feast's done
So give good cheer
And let the brave go on!"

WHAT MAKES JEWS JEWS

by

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WHAT MAKES JEWS JEWS

by

ISRAEL GOLDSTEIN

"There is a unique people."
Book of Esther, III, 8.

Haman is probably the first non-Jew in history to call attention to the unique phenomenon of the Diaspora Jew. "There is a unique people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of thy kingdom and their laws are diverse from those of every people." Villain that he was, he sought to use the uniqueness of the Jewish people as an argument to arouse the king's suspicion and ill will. The uniqueness of the Jewish people has, however, continued to perplex the non-Jew and to challenge definition by Jews. Let us therefore make an attempt to define, what makes Jews Jews.

Two interesting books have appeared recently, which may be helpful in our quest of a definition. One is, "Hear Ye Sons" by Irving Fineman. The other is, "My Life as German and Jew," translated from the German by Jacob Wasserman. Irving Fineman's book gives us an insight into the life of the East European Jew, his manners and mannerisms, customs and beliefs. To the uninitiated these may seem bizarre, but to the understanding they appear quaint and beautiful. Equally impressive is this Jew's passionate devotion

to the Torah, his fine home life, the spiritual quality of his character and the complete adequacy of his Jewish culture for his intellectual and spiritual satisfaction.

The other book, by Wasserman, one of Germany's greatest novelists, is a biographical document written twelve years ago, with a concluding chapter added recently. Wasserman, unlike the narrator of "Hear Ye Sons," was reared not in an ingrown Jewish atmosphere, but in a German atmosphere in which Judaism was quite incidental, in an assimilation atmosphere which dominated a large part of German Jewry during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Wasserman's great grievance is that though he was moulded by German ideas, German character and German customs, he was not accepted by the German people as an authentic exponent of the German spirit. Everywhere and always he was made to feel that he was not a German, but a Jew.

These two books portray two contrasted Jewish types, the East European Jew versus the West European Jew. By studying these two contrasted types, we may glean something of an answer to the question, "What Makes Jews Jews?"

Whenever we wish to arrive at a definition of a type, it is useful to study contrasted species within the same genus. By observing what they have in common despite their differences, we can ascertain what are the essential characteristics which belong to the genus as such. To take an elementary example from the science of biology, if we had to define a mammal on the basis

of observing a human and a whale, both of which are included in that category, we would discover that what entitles them both to be called mammals is the fact that they bear their young and nurse their young. I have gone far afield in order to illustrate what I mean when I say that it is useful to observe contrasting species within a type, in order to arrive at a definition of the essential characteristics which pertain to the type as such.

In defining what makes Jews Jews, it is therefore helpful to have different types of Jews as a field of observation and to be able to ascertain what characteristics they have.

The first thing that Irving Fineman's Jew and Jacob Wasserman's Jew have in common is that they were both born Jews. The accident of birth is the fundamental fact. This accident may be a good fortune or an evil fortune, depending upon how we look on it. They are Jews because their parents were Jews. This is the first fact to remember.

The second fact is that both chose to remain Jews. They could have renounced Judaism and turned to Christianity as has been done by Jews again and again, under the stress of ambition for worldly fame and wealth. It is often said, "Once a Jew, always a Jew." Hitler's imposition of the Jewish label upon those even whose grandparents turned to Christianity, is sometimes referred to in order to indicate that being a Jew is not a matter of choice. It is not, however, a realistic view of the situation. Hitler's "meshugaas" is no cri-

terion. There have been numerous cases of Jews who have left the fold, of whom nothing further has been heard. They have succeeded in disappearing as Jews. Remaining a Jew, therefore, is an act of choice, for there is a possible alternative—to leave the Jewish fold by an act of renunciation.

The third fact to remember is that both characters were regarded by the outside world as being aliens, as not "belonging." Neither of them was accepted by the non-Jewish world. Though in each case, the rejection was different, it was a difference in degree, not in kind. The Jew in "Hear Ye Sons," was definitely out of the Gentile picture by mutual consent. He was violently excluded from the picture. Jacob Wasserman wanted to be a part of the picture, but was not permitted. He was excluded more politely but no less effectively.

We sometimes hear theories offered regarding Jewish characteristics which on the face of them, seem plausible, but upon analysis collapse:

1. That being a Jew is a religious designation. It is the standard argument of Reform Judaism, that the term "Jew" is a religious denomination. This definition is easily refuted by the appearance of champions of the Jewish cause, accepted as such, who themselves are either entirely indifferent to religion, or even maintain an atheistic point of view.
2. That Judaism is a racial characteristic. The racial purity of the Jew is denied by anthropologists. Even the lay observer can discern that the Yemenite Jew is as different racially from the Polish Jew as the Arab is different from the Slav, and that the Span-

ish and Portuguese Jew is as different from the German Jew as the Spaniard is different from the Teuton.

3. That there are unique Jewish temperamental psychological characteristics. It is averred, for example, that the Jew is not the athletic type. Yet it must be apparent to all that the second generation of American Jewish youth participates in athletics, just as keenly as the non-Jewish youth, whether it be on the football field, the baseball diamond or in the pugilistic arena.

Each of these theories and definitions may seem plausible on the surface, but it cannot stand the test of analysis. Each of them, however, has in it some semblance of reality, and all the theories and definitions together do tell something of the actual story. Originally, historically, when the Jewish people had its independent sovereign existence in Palestine, it was a people bound like any other people by ties of race and religion, nationhood; by cultural and temperamental characteristics, such as mark any normal nation. As we are today, however, due to our abnormal history as a Diaspora people, the historic characteristics are not contemporaneously valid altogether. Yet there is a feeling of religious attachment, a feeling of cultural community, a feeling of racial kinship. These feelings may not be scientifically accurate, but they are emotionally valid, to give one a sense of community with others belonging to the Jewish people. It is this sense of community which gives us the title of a Jewish people. We feel a kinship with the religious mystic in far-

off Safed and with the atheist Jew on Union Square, with the light-complexioned Jew in Scandinavia, and with the swarthy Jew in Abyssinia, with the Talmudist in Palestine and with the football star in America. We belong to a great community comprising many, many varieties, and yet bound by a world-wide sense of kinship. We belong to this community by virtue of the fact, first, that we have been born into it, and second, that we choose to remain in it.

Here you have the common denominator between Irving Fineman's "Hear Ye Sons" and Jacob Wasserman's "My Life as German and Jew," the common denominator across their differences.

Now that we know what these two types have in common, let us go back to see what they have in difference. The fundamental difference is that one finds his peace of mind and sustenance of soul in Jewish values, and the other tries to find it in non-Jewish values. Irving Fineman's Jew is not troubled by what the world thinks of him, partly because he feels that the civilization of the outside world is inferior to his civilization. When we consider the Russian and Polish environment in which this scene is set, we can hardly blame the Jew for his attitude. To him the "goy" meant brutality, drunkenness and stupidity. The Jew has held in contempt the civilization of the "goy" because it was a civilization whose worst aspects he has known from earliest times, the primitive "Moloch" worship, the immoral cult of the Baal worship, the paganism of Greece and Rome, and the fanatical persecu-

tions perpetrated by Christendom. The Jew has not been troubled by what the world thought of him, because he realized that the outside world is his irreconcilable enemy, the ineluctable villain in the drama, who, if unconquered, must at least be circumvented, and at any rate, prevented from laying his unholy hands upon the inner sanctuary of Jewish life.

Irving Fineman's Jew has peace of mind because he is not troubled by what the world thinks of him. His only problem is to be let alone to cultivate his own resources, to live in his own world. He has not only peace of mind but integrity of soul, because he is himself an authentic personality who finds complete spiritual satisfaction in his own traditions, his own literature, his own moral code, his own festivals, rites and ceremonies.

The Jew represented by Jacob Wasserman, however, misses both peace of mind and integrity of soul. Emancipated from the ghetto, living in close contact with the outside world, holding converse with his neighbors, and surrounded by a civilization whose values he cannot deny, much less spurn, he is troubled by the need to work out an adjustment between the Jewish culture, which is his heritage, and the culture of the environment, which he respects and admires. He is troubled by what the world thinks of him, because he respects that world and desires its good opinion, and wants to make his intellectual and spiritual contribution to it. Therefore, he is deeply wounded when the world spurns his offering, refuses to accept him as a part of

it, and makes him feel that despite everything, he is an alien who does not "belong." That is the psychological problem of the westernized Jew, the "assimilation" Jew.

Which of these two kinds do we wish to be? Obviously, the choice is not ours. We can no more be the Jew of "Hear Ye Sons" than an airplane can be an oxcart. We may believe that type of Jewish living to be quaint and beautiful, but we cannot model our lives upon it. It is like a museum piece to be admired but not emulated. Occasionally, in a romantic nostalgic mood, we may long for that sort of thing, but when we are actually confronted with the choice, we would not choose it. Once having been subjected to their influence, we could not deliberately isolate ourselves from western culture and civilization.

Indeed, the type of Jew whom Irving Fineman depicts is a disappearing species. He may last a while longer in Poland. In Russia, he is fast disappearing. In Italy, he is almost gone. Likewise in France, Austria, Germany, England. In America, there is still a remnant of the immigrant type, but that is gradually disappearing.

Unfortunately, there disappears with this type some of the fine spiritual values which Jewish life can ill afford to miss, such as, the pure atmosphere of the Jewish home, Jewish loyalty, the integrity of the Jewish soul and the Jewish peace of mind. But the tide of westernization sweeps on and cannot be stopped. It sweeps on despite the attempt which is being made in

Germany to isolate the Jew and to excommunicate him from the general body politic. That effort, I am convinced, will not endure. Hitlerism is a temporary aberration. Though it may go on for a few years, it is against the current of modern life and is bound to fail. So the Jew throughout the world will be more and more of the type, not of Irving Fineman's Jew, but of Jacob Wasserman's Jew, subjected to the currents of western civilization, and obliged to find his place in that civilization.

Now the problem of the modern Jew is how to make terms with the world in which he must live, and at the same time to maintain his spiritual integrity and his peace of mind. The tragedy of the modern Jew is the tragedy of one who having given up his own traditions in order to take on the world's civilization, finds that he has made a worse bargain than even Faust made, for Faust at least got his moment of happiness though it proved illusory, while the Jew, spurned by the world he wooes, is, alas, bereft of his peace of mind and integrity of soul.

That is the essential failure of the assimilationist philosophy. The "assimilation" Jew has been misled by the naive liberalism of the eighteenth century into believing that he was at last entering into a free society, a society free from prejudice and discrimination. Now it has proved to be a false hope. Hitlerism is a danger signal which points to the fundamental problem of the Jew in western civilization.

What is there for us to do? I wish to offer this

as the concluding question in our discussion. "What is there for us to do" seeing that we cannot go back to the kind of life which Irving Fineman's grandfather lived, and that we must necessarily live in a world which having broken down the physical Ghetto walls preserves the spiritual walls intact.

It is for us to accept the situation, not bitterly and morosely as Jacob Wasserman does, but manfully and self-reverently. If Jacob Wasserman's Judaism had been more positive, if his attitude had been one of espousal rather than toleration, he might have found in his Judaism much to console and compensate him for his disappointments, much to bring him spiritual satisfaction. It is no excuse that he did not have the right kind of Jewish teacher as a child. He could have found sources of Jewish learning and inspiration even after attaining manhood. Herzl, reared in an assimilation environment, yet reclaimed for Judaism after attaining manhood, could have served as an example to him. Ludwig Lewisohn, already a mature man in his forties, when he began to study the Talmud and the whole range of Jewish literature, could have served as an example. Herzl and Lewisohn found their spiritual rebirth in Zionism. Wasserman, however, makes a weak apology for having spurned Zionism. Wasserman could have steeped himself more thoroughly in the culture of his people without excluding German culture, any more than Herzl or Lewisohn excluded western culture.

What of you and me?

You and I are not Herzls or Lewisohns. But there is something everyone of us can do to give more content to the Jew within him—intellectual content and emotional content. You can acquire emotional content by affiliating with a Jewish cause. Let it be Zionism, let it be the Synagogue. Find something which will give you an opportunity to act Jewishly and to serve Jewishly. Intellectual content you can gain by reading and study. The ignorance of American Jewry in Jewish matters is abysmal. I doubt if ever before there has been a Jewish population in any of the lands of the Diaspora, as untutored in Jewish culture as is American Jewry. Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Jews are alike in their "am ha-arazuth." Even more important than gaining intellectual content ourselves, is to give it to our children. The greatest tragedy of the German Jew is the tragedy of nothing now to sustain them. The most unbearable suffering is to suffer without knowing wherefore. It is doubly tragic that a people should "perish without knowledge."

Now we can summarize in a few words, what makes Jews Jews.

Is the term "Jew" a racial designation, a religious label, or a national epithet? It is none of these alone, for there are Jews who do not feel any ties of nationhood other than those which bind them to the lands in which they dwell, there are other Jews who disavow religious beliefs or Synagogue affiliation, and there are enough diversities in physical characteristics between Jews in various parts of the world to throw

doubt upon the theory of Jewish racial consistency.

The only fact which cannot be questioned is the fact of a sense of community which exists among the scattered members of this people, and which has its historical if not its contemporary roots in religious, racial and national kinship. Actually, at the present time, any one of these three identifications would be sufficient to sustain the sense of Jewish kinship, even though the other two be absent.

The fact that this community is persistent in its will to preserve and perpetuate its identity, gives it a conspicuous place vis à vis the non-Jewish society.

Being a Jew, therefore, means first, the accident of birth into this minority group; secondly, an act of choice, choosing to remain in that group despite the difficulties it must encounter; thirdly, an act of cognition; to learn to know the history and literature of this people so as to understand its soul and appreciate its place in the world; and finally, an act of transmission, to transmit to the next generation this heritage and the will to carry it on so that the Jewish people may not perish from the earth.

HAMAN OF OLD AND HITLER TODAY

by

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HAMAN OF OLD AND HITLER TODAY

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Solomon long ago said, "There is nothing new under the sun," and though in this age of new inventions we know that this does not hold in its entirety, yet as we gather experience we learn that human nature is the same the world over, that human experience repeats itself with monotonous regularity, that history is like a continuous encore. It may in fact be claimed, and the claim maintained, that world history, when reduced to its elements is but a series of ten or fifteen records which are put successively into a phonograph of the human symphonic machinery; and when they are finished, it is back again to the old record. Noting this phenomenon, there has arisen the proverb, History repeats itself. Verily, that is all it is—repetition. That is why Solomon long ago said, there is nothing new under the sun.

The Purim story seems to be so unique as to have happened but once in all history; and then the record was broken. Nothing of the sort! Would that were the case! As a matter of fact, it has repeated itself over and over again in every century since Haman and Mordecai matched wits in Shushan. Only it so happened that in Sushan there was a matchless chronicler who wrote vividly enough to achieve immortality for his story.

Let us rehearse the old story and note how entirely twentieth century its character is,—the scheme and theme and the very dramatis personae themselves. Ahasuerus and Vashti first appear, Ahasuerus the passive oriental despot, Vashti the mouthpiece of a new and aroused feminism. Woman refusing to be the tool, the plaything, the parasite of man. She is Anna Howard Shaw and Jeannette Perkins Gilman of the year 400 B. C. E. She fell in the fight, but the cause went marching on. What circumvented her, an unscrupulous Haman, was finally destroyed by another feminist, Esther. But that's the story, or rather is one of the minor themes. The real motif is dark and sinister, black tragedy; a man of hate, Haman, had risen to the prime-ministership of Persia and he carefully laid his plans to destroy the Jews of that land. To overcome the king was easy; not so easy to hoodwink the queen, Vashti. So Vashti had to be eliminated, which was quickly done, under the pretext that she refused to take part in the carousals of the court. Any excuse would do. The place of consort to the king was vacant. A queen was to be chosen. Who shall it be? There arises a dominant personality who seeing through the plans of Haman proceeds to frustrate them. Mordecai means to save his people from the impending doom. He acts. His ward, Esther, is put in position to be chosen queen. From that place of vantage she frustrates the plans of Haman. Though Haman charge the Jewish people with all the crimes in the calendar—and through the ages every crime was put to their ac-

count—though he induce the king to select the date of a really up-to-date pogrom by casting lots, the woman whom he eliminated in Vashti and reappearing in Esther is his downfall. The Jews are saved by her courage, her wit, her pleading and her ability to speak in defense of her people. Haman is hanged. The people are urged to recall this rescue from destruction by a feast—Revels and Remembrance of the Poor, Gladness and Gifts.

Oh, that is an old and impossible story, you say. A good drama, a fair novel, but things do not happen that way outside the Arabian nights. Just think of it! Mordecai is right at hand to overhear the conspirators against the king's life. Haman the prime minister has to act as equerry to the despised Jew. Esther theatrically pleads and saves. And Haman is hanged on the gallows that he erected for Mordecai. Of course there is an air of theatricality over all the book of Esther. Nevertheless, it is true. Not only in Shushan, Persia, 2400 years ago; it is true today in every land where the Jew dwells. The same old characters tread the stage. The same charges against the Jew are made, the same motif, the same means of salvation are at hand.

Let us look at the characters a little more closely. Ahasuerus, the passive, brainless plaything of stronger and more dominant natures, the idle lover of pleasure, without a standard of morals, without a philosophy of life, the hand-to-mouth, poor rich king. Lo! he liveth today. Behold him in Everyman, his real name is King Mob. He is the most credulous, the most indolent, the

most unthinking, the most gullible, the most easily led —the most dangerous — element in our civilization. Just a lot of inflammable material that lies around for the careless or unscrupulous match to set afire.

And the Hamans. We have them in every age, and they are not wanting in this. Let us just name a few. Torquemada in Spain, Pobiedonostseff in Russia, Eisenmenger in Germany along with the 19th century Ahlwardt and Stoecker, and the modern Ludendorff leading his Hackenkreuzler of a beer-cellar revolution against the Jews. (And even in America we have them, the Fords, the Simmons, the Evans.) Shrewd and calculating, sometimes ignorant and bigoted but truly sincere in their murderous bigotry, nearly always playing Ahasuerus, now against Vashti, now against the Jews, for their own advancement and profit. It is the dirtiest business on earth, done by the dirtiest of all crews. They lie and lie, they resort to every base trick to arouse King Mob, to flatter his vanity, anything, anything if only—Der Jude Wird Verbrannt! The Jew must be burned. Nor does he bother to change in each generation the character or color of his charges against the Jew. What did Haman charge the Jew with? It is found in chapter 3, verse 8 of Esther, "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of thy kingdom; their laws are diverse from those of every people; neither keep they the king's laws," two truths and one lie. We are scattered, and yet they say we are united against the world. Our laws are diverse,

meaning our religious laws. It that a menace? We do not obey the law of the land. That is a lie. In whose ranks stands the Jew? Surely he will be found with the law-abiding. Yet they charged him with the most dastardly crimes, he was the usurer, he was the demander of the pound of flesh, he poisoned the wells in the middle ages, he demanded Christian blood for the moistening of the Passover cracker. Each and everyone of these charges the old, old lie.

And to this very 20th century, that calls itself Christian and enlightened, the Hamans urge on the Ahasueruses until blood-lust fills the heart of the mob. Throughout the ages the Jew has served as the scapegoat when any widespread misery assailed any nation or continent. When the Black Death, caused as we now know by filth and unsanitary living, decimated central Europe during the Middle Ages, the Jew was selected as the Azazel on the pretense that he poisoned the wells. When the peasantry suffered through the rapacity of their petty barons and were ready to rise against them in England in the 13th, and in France in the 14th century, they were appeased by the expulsion of the Jews from the land. When Czardom saw the growing sullenness of the masses against the government the Jews were thrown to them as one throws a horse or a cow to the wolves to turn them away from their first object. Whenever a nation or a people is in travail and misery, the Jews of that nation are the ones that are blamed for all the misfortunes that have befallen. Always the Jew suffers most.

The World War brought about a disarrangement of the financial and economic systems in all countries, especially the European. For the past ten years at least a growing load of misery has descended upon these nations and especially those in central Europe. What with their internal debts and their additional heavy reparation payments, these nations broke under the intolerable burden and according to schedule anti-Semitism enjoyed a resurgence in all these lands. What the Jews have suffered in Roumania, Austria, Poland, Hungary and Germany, over and above the deep misery of their fellow-countrymen, through this scourge of Anti-Semitism during the past decade is a harrowing story. But in all the lands that I have mentioned except Germany the Jew has been more or less inured to the shafts of Jew-hatred; they had felt them sink into their flesh, off and on, through the centuries.

But that this should happen in its most virulent form in Germany is surprising, for not only had Germany for centuries been totally free from any symptom of the Anti-Semitic disease except at infrequent intervals when it appeared as an academic proposition, more, the Jews of Germany had for over a century become integrally German. Whereas in Russia, Poland, and Roumania the Jew retained his Yiddish language instead of adopting the language of his country and also remained different in dress and manner, in Germany there was complete assimilation in everything but religion, and the resultant situation disproves the unfounded, yet oft-repeated statement that Anti-Semitism

is caused by the Jew's failure to be one with the other people among whom he lives. The German Jew was and is a German in thought, in dress, in language and in patriotism, in all except religion. And yet Hitlerism is the answer he has received.

Again we are surprised at German anti-Semitism when we think of the German mind and the German ideals as represented by Goethe and Schiller and Kant and Hegel and Fichte, when we recall that the finest and broadest statement, as well as the most convincing for real toleration is "Nathan the Wise," written by that genuine lover of man, the German Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. And our surprise mounts to amazement when we think how lavishly the German Jew has contributed to German civilization and culture. In music, Meyerbeer and Offenbach are but the peaks among hundreds of gifted German-Jewish musicians; and so in the other arts, Heine is admittedly one of Germany's three outstanding poets and Albert Einstein the world's greatest physicist. The prestige of Germany in science, in the arts and in commerce was augmented by this Jewish contribution. And the answer to these original and monumental contributions is—Hitlerism!

What then is Hitlerism? Many will immediately say that it is German fascism. It is certainly an attempt on the part of a large group of the German people to establish a form of government in Germany similar to the Fascism of Italy; but it is far more than that. Hitlerism is a movement that looks toward the restoration of Germany as a world power along with

the return to Germany of its foreign colonies taken during and after the war. It stands opposed to any further reparation payments by Germany, it demands revision of the Versailles Treaty in many points, especially on the point of Germany's guilt for bringing on the war; it insists upon its right to a political, customs, or tariff union with Austria if Austria is willing, and it demands once more the right of arming Germany to the extent that German need and ability to pay justify. These positions are maintained by the Nazi, or National Socialist party, a manifestation of the weaknesses and inequalities of structure that come of hasty or emergency organization, a structure that must crumble immediately after the emergency is passed.

Along with its other points of view, Hitlerism as represented by this erstwhile Austrian corporal, Adolph Hitler, is definitely anti-Semitic. This arises from the nationalist—narrow nationalist philosophy of the movement. The sacred Germanic race—whatever they can possibly mean by Germanic race—is invoked by Hitler and his followers—and the Jews, tho they have lived in Germany for over 1000 years, as many families have, are ruled out as aliens who have no rights in Germany. Hitler threatened that when he came into power "Jewish heads would roll in the dust," suggesting a pogrom a la Russe. And be it said that since he was called to the chancellorship he has done much to give the Jew, as well as all liberals, pause. He has seized all the essentials of fascist power which he is exploiting to realize as many of his promises as

possible in order to insure his party's success. And how tragically the Jew has suffered in these nationalist operations!

Well, is Hitler a man on horseback, the type of personality that Germany actually needed to stay the advance of a rather violent form of Communism that had appeared in Germany? Or is he just a mountebank who has cleverly exploited the fears, needs, and miseries of his nation to rise to power? Does he represent Germany? Will he last? The quality of his speeches, mediocre in reasoning, passionately rousing the emotions—and the unworthiest emotions at that—to cover the dearth of ideas, the demagogic, frothy lashings of hatred—setting group against group, all these evidences mark him clearly the mountebank, who lacked ability to rise in four war years to a higher rank than that of corporal in the Austrian army. Soon he will be proven no man on horseback with the qualities of a dictator, to which position he ardently aspires, but just the mouthpiece for the moment of a humiliated and hungry people. Does he represent the German people? I have greater faith in the sturdiness, the honor, the decency and idealism of the German people than to think that he truly represents them. He is merely the first log—even though rotten to the core—that was pushed to the top in the log-jam of German history—and when the jam is broken and smoother waters ensue, he will sink into the anonymity which his meagre talents deserve. In the meantime he is a menace to Germany—for hate, which he has engendered in the

German heart hurts the hater even more than the hated. He is a menace, too, to the peace of Europe and the world, this swashbuckler rattling his sword vociferously in its scabbard. And alas, he is a menace to the Jew—another Haman, who accuses the Jew glibly and as falsely, in the most unblushing manner as did his prototype in Persia of old. The Jews of Germany are meeting the danger with dignity, demanding their rights of citizenship and calling upon the public opinion of the world to record itself on this mediaeval barbarity which is being visited upon them. Three threats have been made, first to reduce all Jews, whether their families have lived in Germany a thousand years, as many have, or just a generation, to the status of aliens and to take away their previously recognized rights as citizens. Second, to drive a large section of them out of Germany as they used to do in the good old days of the Dark Ages, expelling them from England in the 13th century, from France in the 14th, and from Spain and Portugal in the 15th century. And the third threat is no less than Death. Said Hitler, "When we come into power Jewish heads will roll in the dust." This in Germany, this in the 20th century! And each threat has largely been carried out. BATTLE OF ARMAGIDDE

But we are certain that with the return of normalcy, when the humiliation of Germany is removed and hunger and misery banished, the Hitlers will be repudiated as they always have been by civilized nations. We rely on God now as our forefathers did in Persia of old, when the first Haman arose against Israel. And

it depends on the Mordecais and Esthers. It depends on God—and the Mordecais and Esthers. We need them as selfless and courageous now as then. They must do four things. They must KNOW, to be able to deny the charges that perennially are hurled against the Jew. They must be able to withstand the solemn Nordic and his charge of inferiority of Jewish blood and brain and soul. What sardonic irony in it all! The scientists assure us there is no such thing as a Nordic race; and even if there were, what about the inferiority charge against all other races? Where is your Moses, your Isaiah, your Psalmist, where even your Jesus? Mordecais and Esthers must KNOW first, to defend Israel. Mordecais and Esthers are needed to keep Israel immune against the disease that has infected every people that was long kept degraded. The Mordecais and Esthers must preserve the Jewish self-respect; we are priests and must keep ourselves unbesmirched and unstained in the modern easy familiarity with dirt. Israel must be kept so pure that it continues legitimate and easy to defend it. We need the Mordecais and Esthers who will stand up against the Hamans. That requires courage and selflessness; not worrying so much about our own skin, but standing for justice and right though the heavens fall! Courage is needed for defense.

And we need a refuge for defense, a place to rally, to find breathing space when we are sore beset, a place near the holy of holies of our spiritual treasures, a shrine of the Jewish mind and the Jewish soul. Morde-

cais and Esthers are needed for the upbuilding of Palestine. So well is that being done, so sturdy are the Mordecais and Esthers that have set their hand to this holy work that in all the dark chapters of Jewish history of these past years, the Palestine paragraph is the only bright one. There the Mordecais and Esthers have divided their labors in a most natural way, one builds the refuge and the other keeps it fine and clean and sweet. The man builds the house, the Woman, the Esther, or Hadassah, as her Jewish name really is, makes it a home, orderly and clean and with the light of God shining there.

If all do their work, if the Mordecais and Hadassahs continue, the Hamans will be circumvented and Israel saved.

PESACH

In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at dusk, is the Lord's passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord; seven days ye shall eat unleavened bread. In the first day, ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work. And ye shall bring an offering made by fire unto the Lord seven days; in the seventh day is a holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work.

Leviticus 23:4-8.

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THE PASSOVER

by

ALEXANDER LYONS

No festal observance in Jewish life stirs me more deeply than that which commemorates the departure of Israel from Egypt. It comes to me annually with a twofold message of fundamental and far-reaching importance.

Primarily the Passover emphasizes Israel's Providential appointment. It reminds that, in keeping with God's mandate to Abraham, the Jew is to be a servitor of God at the Altar of Humanity. Subjugation may be the historic aim and ambition of other groups. The Jew must regard himself as Divinely ordained for unselfish service.

I wish that the Jew could be brought to regard himself as a missioner of those ideals of spirituality expressed in social service which the Prophets propounded and proclaimed so eloquently. In such a conception of his dignity and duty the Jew has, to my mind, his dominant urge and justification.

I am not content to be a Jew merely by nativity or traditional inheritance. I certainly do not sense a call to Jewish persistence because I am one of a persecuted people. I am a Jew because of the compulsion of an intelligent conviction that I am Divinely endowed and traditionally enriched with an ability that I must con-

strue into a responsibility. I suffer the pain of Jewish identification, with all my people, in a world that is still so superficially civilized as to penalize conscientious conviction, but I cheerfully accept the burden with the determination to sublimate it into a spiritual and moral blessing. If the Jew were true to his election of God as proclaimed by the Passover, his would be increasing joy of the realization of his rich contribution to humanity. He should thus in time convert much of the world's criticism and antagonism into compliment and amity. In the long run, worth wins.

There is a second and more basic element in the drama of the story of Passover which has great personal value for human life everywhere and not merely for the Jew. This implication seems to me to reinforce and justify the claim and call of Israel as a Mission People.

When God from the heart of the flaming bush made known to Moses His determination to free Israel, He did so with those weighty words: "I have surely seen the affliction of my people in Egypt." A knowledge of the Hebrew original can easily discover that the twofold use of the verb 'seen' carries the implication of a particular emphasis. What it seems to me to say is that there had been some doubt of God's knowledge and interest in the suffering of His people in their bondage. Now He comes with the pointed assurance that He has surely seen and is now prepared to execute their liberation.

This second suggestion of the Passover, of God's

Providential personal interest, is supplementary to the other of Israel's appointment. As long as we may feel that God has a personal interest in us, we can go forward with cumulative courage in devotion to the duty He has imposed.

No one of us but at times suffers such spiritual slump and depressing discouragement that we look out upon the horizon of our lives and fail to find there the glimmer of a single star of hope. There is abundant justification for us to take and maintain the more cheering attitude, that as God's children we are not forsaken, that He does care. We shall find warrant of this comforting conviction as we give place in our lives to the time element. God's plans often mature slowly. We are here from birth till burial to grow spiritually and morally. Life, as I understand it, is a term in the school of character. This requires a combination of time and manifold experiences of constant and conflicting diversity. If lived with the consciousness of this implication, paralleled with the determination to grow spiritually and morally we shall never lose hope or lack courage. The untutored populace of Israel in Egypt lacked by reason of their bondage the proper spiritual vision and moral monition and so could not discover the comforting assurance that they were within the compass of God's care.

Nor had it been borne in upon the consciousness of Israel in Egypt that they were Divinely destined to a historic purpose. They were too immature for that. That was a subsequent peak in the ascent of their

progress. It is no wonder that they required so many years of desert wandering. It was a purificatory and spiritually sublimating process. Had they been possessed with the conviction that their suffering was part of a preparatory purpose they would not have doubted the ultimate assertion of God's fostering favor.

There is no life without the possibility of contribution to a progressive world-order. Each of us is endowed with Divine possibility. Each of us can grow spiritually in moral expression indefinitely. Courageous and consistent loyalty to one's better self is a positive path to the swelling of the sum-total to the happiness of humanity. What a joy to have the consciousness of so important a function in the economy of the world! What a call to courage! What a summons to patient persistence! It matters not how burdened life may be. No matter how we may be compelled to suffer physically we shall find an ever-flowing well-spring and moral momentum if we but bear in mind that, as proclaimed by the drama of Israel's Exodus, we are not ships of chance upon the ocean of life, but barques Divinely laden and commissioned to arrive ultimately with grateful gladness in the Harbor of Humanity.

This is what the Passover annually says to me. It has persistently furnished me with firm faith, constant courage, and unfailing hope to maintain my Jewish loyalty as a path to the noblest human duty. I commend it to others, primarily to Jews, secondarily to others. God's proclamation of Divine purpose of Israel

for which they are so wondrously equipped as a result of His personal interest in the individual as well as in the people, carries a curative and conservative import for every human life, no matter what be its extraction or identification.

I should like to see every Jew annually rejoiced by the Passover and increasingly committed as a missioner of its superb ideal of service. Thus would each of us deserve the dignity of being practically one of a Priest People as we have been too long only in protestation and preachment, a God-choosing instead of only a God-chosen people.

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THE UNENDING EXODUS

by

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"And Moses said unto the people, remember this day on which you came out from Egypt from the house of bondage."

(Exodus 13,3).

It is through the Passover festival that we recall the day on which we came out from Egypt from the house of bondage. For no less than eight days do we observe this commemorative festival. And surely, such a generous week observed every year should suffice to celebrate a remote and isolated event which took place three thousand years ago. Yet the conscience of the Jewish people is not satisfied even with this prolonged and unfailing annual religious and national commemoration. For during the rest of the year we constantly hark back to the exodus, remembering it over and over again in our prayers and religious observances. Every Sabbath eve when we chant the Kiddush, the sanctification of the Sabbath, we hail the Sabbath as a reminder of our exodus from Egypt. The festival of Shabuoth is, in a sense, a prolongation and completion of the Passover festival of the exodus, while of the festival of Succoth the Bible explicitly states that "Ye shall dwell in booths seven days, all that are home-born in Israel shall dwell in booths; that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to

dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt." (Leviticus 23, 42 and 43).

Throughout the Bible the theme of the exodus from Egypt is a *leit motif*. It is recalled in the most unexpected relations. In the Torah it is urged as a motive for such varied commands as that of using true weights and measures (Leviticus 19, 36), not exacting interest from the poor (Leviticus 25, 38), redemption of one who has sold himself to a resident alien (Leviticus 25, 55), and even for the wearing of fringed garments (Numbers 15, 41). The historical and prophetic books, and the Psalms and other holy writings recall the exodus repeatedly. The very first of the Ten Commandments, introducing, as it were, God to Israel, introduces him not as the God of the universe, but as the God who brought the children of Israel out from Egypt. "I am the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." (Exodus 20, 2). The prayer book continues this Biblical tradition of indelibly impressing the exodus from Egypt on our Jewish consciousness as the cardinal formative influence in the history of the Jew and of Judaism.

Yet Egypt was a goodly land, rich and fertile, a country which one would not ordinarily rejoice to leave. It was a land which one would not readily give up for the more grudging soil of Palestine. Described as "a garden of the Lord" (Genesis 13, 10), Egypt was a land which almost without human effort brought forth abundant crops, as year by year the Nile over-

flowed its banks and by a touch of the foot was made to irrigate the fields. It was incomparably richer than Palestine. "For the land whither thou goest in to possess it is not as the land of Egypt from whence thou didst come out, where thou didst sow thy seed and didst water it with thy foot as a garden of herbs." (Deuteronomy 11,10). Nevertheless, leaving Egypt is to be remembered as the beginning of the happiness of fulfillment for the Jew. It is the supreme creative moment in Jewish history, and has become the motivation of our festivals, our commandments and our social ethics.

To appreciate how striking is this emphasis on the departure from Egypt one should notice that neither in the Biblical command nor in the traditions of Jewish life is there any celebration of the entrance into the promised land. Every Jewish school child is familiar with the story of the exodus from Egypt. In the Haggada we rehearse it around the table in happy vein, and dwell on its details. But how many know the story told in the third and fourth chapters of Joshua describing the entrance into Palestine? Every one knows the date of the exodus—midnight of the fifteenth of Nisan, the first day of Passover. But who knows the date of the entrance into the promised land? "And the people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho." (Joshua 4, 19). Every one knows of Passover, the festival of our exodus from Egypt. But the entrance into Palestine is commemorated by

no festival, no observance, no ritual. The act of entering into the promised land has made no impression whatsoever on our Jewish consciousness.

Would one appreciate still more keenly how unusual this is, one may contrast it with our American attitude towards the Pilgrim fathers. How little impression is made on our American consciousness by the story of William Brewster and his congregation at Scrooby, their exodus to Holland and their stay in Leyden. How little are we concerned with the detailed story of the final exodus of the Pilgrims from England. But the American heart thrills to the story of their landing at Plymouth Rock on December 21, 1620. That episode is one of the most beloved and venerated in American tradition. The exodus from Europe does not live in the historic consciousness of the American people, but the entrance of the Pilgrims into the promised land of America is one of the great and crucial moments in our national story.

How shall we interpret this iterative emphasis on the exodus from Egypt and our failure even to recall the entry into Palestine? Much could be said in explanation; however, one fundamental consideration most clearly illumines this enigmatic fact.

When on the Seder night we tell the story of the exodus, the narration conveys no mood of completed achievement. It recalls how we became slaves, and how through leaving Egypt the possibilities of freedom opened up for us. But it does not hail freedom as something that has been attained. "This year we are

here, slaves; but next year may we be in the Land of Israel as free men" is the opening and keynote prayer of the Haggada. The exodus is dramatized not as the close of an era, but as the beginning of hope for the future. In the Haggada, we do not picture ourselves in the character of a people comfortably settled in its land with its mission achieved. Nor do we even congratulate ourselves upon a triumphant entrance into Palestine. Scarcely once does the Haggada even recall our entrance into the land. It focuses attention on the exodus, evoking a picture of movement, of setting out on a journey, of the beginning of a quest.

A charming traditional custom is sometimes associated with the Haggada. At one point in this domestic celebration the door opens and a child appears on the threshold, dressed as the Bible prescribes for the eating of the paschal sacrifice, with loins girt, sandals on the feet, staff in hand, and matzoth carried on the back. (Exodus 12, 11). This little incident is something more than a finely conceived educational dramatization of the story of the exodus. It presents the Jew as about to set forth on his journey from Egypt, and symbolizes the Jewish concept of the eternal quest of the wandering Jew.

For the wandering Jewish people there is no stopping to celebrate the entry into the promised land. Entering a land is not synonymous with taking possession of it. The Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock had entered this land, but they had not the faintest glimmerings of the fabulous possibilities of magnificent development

which was to come from that unpromising beginning. In this spirit we Jewish pilgrims have always concentrated our attention not on Joshua's entry into Palestine and the painful conquest of the land, but on the exodus from Egypt as the occasion of the birth and enunciation of our historic mission. Historic destiny does not allow us to sit back and celebrate our entry into Palestine, for the promised land is always before us to be conquered. We are conscious of the disparity between the freedom attained by the little Jewish people as a result of the exodus, and the limitless possibilities of the development of liberty for all mankind. We live continuously in the spirit of the challenge presented by the exodus, never resting on past laurels, but always moving onwards away from slavery and Egyptian darkness towards the vision of a promised land and a new dawn for humanity. We do not allow any festival of provisional achievement to check and hem in our vision of an ultimate social order on earth that shall be free of slavery and oppression. The promised land is always in the future.

This belief in limitless progress is the essence of Jewish optimism. Life testifies to marvelous progress in the mechanics of living, in man's continually increasing power of dominating his physical environment and in his ability to make possible a more planned and wiser economy of living. But the Jew believes that corresponding with this physical progress there can and must go a development in man's spiritual progress. The protest voiced by the exodus from Egypt was

directed not against the physical and cultural achievements of Egypt, but against its spiritual corruption. Had the world's future been dependent on the development of physical control, as enthusiastic men of science sometimes tell us, the protest of the exodus would never have been evoked, since Egypt led the ancient world in technical achievement. The exodus was from a world of classic builders who were able to hew and mould the elements of the earth according to their desires; towards a world in which man will be able to control, sublimate and beautify those desires. The exodus was required to organize the quest for a society which would not only build physical cities for our bodies, but which would have a soul. The pilgrimage of Israel from slavery to freedom has been from a world in which the body of man was fettered, towards one in which not only might the body of man fly through the air but the soul of man might soar even higher. Israel had to march forth from Egypt to find a world in which there would be no more violence, no more hatred, no more enmity, no more injustice, no more oppression and slavery, a world in which each should sit under his own vine and fig tree and none would make him afraid. With the exodus Israel set out to find a world governed not by Pharaoh, or his modern counterpart, the ruthless, unmoral, Nietzschean monster the superman, but by God.

This being Israel's historic quest, Israel's work is ever to be done. Profoundly true is the world's conception of that tragic figure, the wandering Jew; but

the Jew wanders ceaselessly not, as the world thinks, to expiate some crime that he has committed, but to expiate the crime of human oppression by the Egypts of every generation. The wandering Jew with loins girt, sandals tied and staff in hand, is forever setting forth anew to proclaim the summons to human freedom. It is a wearying, dangerous mission which the footsore pilgrim of all the ages has undertaken, a mission which has exacted a cruel toll from those who have borne it forward. It is said in the Bible that the children of Israel went up from Egypt *chamushim.* This term the rabbis interpret as meaning that only one in five, or one in fifty, or one in five hundred, or according to Rabbi Nehorai, only one in five thousand, survived to escape from Egypt. In every generation only a saving remnant of Israel has been stout-hearted enough to bear the burden of the Jewish mission; but that faithful remnant has accepted it with heroic martyr spirit. Wander on, then, O wandering Jew, among the nations, summoning ever anew the Pharaohs of the earth to break the bonds of slavery, turning ever anew your back on the Egyptian darkness of oppression and facing a new dawn. Wander on, for such is your destiny, until that distant day when the world shall have learned the universal Passover lesson of freedom. Until then Israel must continue to celebrate the exodus. Only when that day shall come will Israel be free to celebrate the entry into the promised land.

CONDITIONS OF EMANCIPATION OR THE NEW FREEDOM

by

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CONDITIONS OF EMANCIPATION, OR THE NEW FREEDOM

by

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Passover is the national Jewish Festival in an especial sense, inasmuch as it commemorates the genesis of Israel's nationhood. But Pesach not only looks back upon the distant past: it also looks to the future. It symbolizes Jewish aspiration for the future both of Israel and of all mankind. In talmudic phrase it represents the "redemption from Egypt" as well as the "emancipation of the future." גאולה לעתיד

What are the conditions of the world's emancipation, in the best sense of the term? Practically the same as made possible, according to Rabbinic account, the first deliverance.

We read in the Midrash; our fathers were redeemed because of four things. They did not change their names. They did not change their language. They did not indulge in slander, and none of them was guilty of immorality. Such elements, or factors similar to these, enter into the scheme of Israel's (and humanity's) new and, we hope, grander and more enduring freedom.

I. "Because they did not change their names." This is not to be taken literally. It is of comparatively little

importance whether one retains his Hebrew name, o borrows a name from his environment. Many promi nent figures in the Talmud and in Jewish history ha non-Jewish names, e. g. Antigonus, R. Alexande Hyrkanos, Theodore of Rome, and many others. Eve Moses, who, according to the Midrash, had a numbe of Hebrew names, retained, out of gratitude, the Egyp tian name given him by the Princess who saved hi from the waters of the Nile.

What name, then, is meant? There are three name a man has, says a Midrashic commentary, one whic his parents give him, one which others give him, an one by which he is designated in the Book of Records

The name given us at birth is of no practical im portance. It is purely accidental. That which me apply to us is not altogether reliable. It is not neces sarily indicative of one's character, for men in des cribing others are often swayed by unjust motive envy, jealously, spite or hate, or else by favoritism friendship, and the like. The name most significan reflecting in true measure one's character is that whic one earns for himself by virtue of his life and conduc the one which the Preacher extols in the verse, "a good name is better than precious oil." (Eccles. VII:1 It is the name which is inscribed in the Heavenl Record.

This name, this reputation of ours for honesty, nob ility of character, reverence, respect for law, etcetera we must guard jealously. Do not forego your reputa tion, as a Jew, for spirituality, steadfastness and fidel

ity. What a profanation of the Name it is if they who belong to the "Kingdom of Priests" become notorious for materialism, as exploiters, profiteers, lawbreakers or as "chiselers" under the New Deal. In the present attempt to bring about a new, better order of things we must play our part honestly and honorably, faithfully and enthusiastically.

II. "They did not change their language." This may be taken literally, as referring to our retention of the Hebrew language and of our sacred literature. Our ancestors were careful to cultivate and preserve our intellectual trophies and spiritual treasures. A people which aspires to be free, proud, and self-conscious, will glory in its moral and intellectual achievements, in its precious Heritage, its contributions to civilization. Our (peculiar) national culture is most vital to the preservation of Judaism.

In a figurative sense, too, this dictum has a useful lesson for us. It may be made to refer to the kind of speech that the Talmud has in mind when it declares, in Tractate Berakot, "A man should always use a clean and graceful speech." We should cultivate a language morally clean and spiritually gracious, the language of kindness, love and sympathy. For language is the key to one's innermost being. It reflects the heart and the spirit one possesses. As a people destined to do great things, standing, as we hope, on the verge of a glorious future and grand achievements, let us use only the tongue of gentleness, courtesy and sympathy towards all men. The world is hungering for the tongues of

kindness and brotherliness. And not only the Jews in Naziland, but men in every part of the world are suffering from the cruel and bitter words of those actuated by intolerance and hate.

III. This brings us to the third prerequisite of the Redemption. "They did not indulge in slander." Slander is the worst of evils, greater, says the Midrash, than any of the cardinal sins. And that vice is as common today as ever in the past. There is a practical application for this in our day. To bring about the realization of our century-old hope, we must learn to give up our mutual prejudices, fault-findings, and accusations, and our carping criticisms of one another. This is a condition essential to emancipation. We cannot afford disunion at a time when unity and mutual good-will are so badly needed. In the present heart-breaking crisis confronting our brethren in Germany and elsewhere the need for unity and sympathy, mutual confidence and understanding is greater than ever. All sections of Jewry are calling for united effort in combatting the recrudescence of anti-Semitism, and we cannot afford the luxury of division in Israel.

IV. "Not one of them was guilty of immorality." This emphasizes the preservation of our moral character. This we must guard most jealously—our reputation for chastity and moral purity. Let not men have occasion to scorn the Jew on the grounds of indecency, licentiousness, immodesty and vulgarity. Observe with our wonted Jewish strictness the highest moral standards, decency in the drama, the films, and literature . . .

Do not pander to the tastes of the degenerate. In the moral and spiritual world we can still be the teachers of mankind. Despite the ravings of the Nazis, Israel can still play a superior role in the fields of ethics and morality. We are not a degenerate, immoral people. They lie who seek to defame the Jew.

My friends: the Hebrew month, Nissan, is historically the month of Redemption and, according to Rabbinic tradition, destined to see the new freedom for which Israel and humanity are yearning. It thus coincides in time with the plans of the present Federal administration which, it is hoped, will usher in a new period, bring about the New Deal: in other words, effect our new freedom, freedom for all classes, from the injustices and inequalities of the old social and economic system and—incidentally, also freedom for Israel and all oppressed minorities, from the effects of hatred, prejudice and intolerance.

In this great and blessed enterprise, Israel must do its part. For the Jew who, from of old, was destined to be a blessing to the world, still has the privilege and the duty to set the pace and to point the way for the rest of mankind. The synagogue has always stood as the symbol of those virtues and ideals which are indispensable in the work of freeing men from the evils, cruelties and injustices of the past. It has ever proclaimed unselfishness, justice, mercy, and humanitarianism as the corner stone of the new and happier world order, for which the families of the earth have been hoping and praying.

I exhort my co-religionists throughout the land to remain true to the finest traditions of Israel, and loyally to cooperate in the noble enterprise of our national government to put an end to the recurring periods of distress, anxiety and suffering of the masses of the people, and inaugurate a new period, the new freedom for America, Israel, and, ultimately, for the whole of the human race.

SHABUOTH

And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the day of rest, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the waving; seven weeks shall there be complete; even unto the morrow after the seventh week shall ye number fifty days and ye shall present a new meal-offering unto the Lord . . . and ye shall make proclamation on the selfsame day; there shall be a holy convocation unto you. Ye shall do no manner of servile work; It is a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

Leviticus 23:15-21

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THE ESSENCE OF JUDAISM

by

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This is the festival of Shvuoth and is to be devoted to the "Giving of the Law." The prayers, the liturgy and the assigned readings in the Scriptures are replete with references to the importance of the "Law." Not the law in the manner conceived by the average student of Judaism, who considers it an amalgam of six hundred and thirteen performances and prohibitions and a mixture of moral and ritual commandments, but the law as an active driving religious and moral principle. It is to the consideration and analysis of this principle that we ought to dedicate this message of today.

In the very early days of the Jewish Religion, when it made its first contacts with the outside world and the competing pagan religions, clarification and elucidation of its essential principles were already attempted by the prophets. One prophet declared them to be thirteen, another reduced them to six, another reduced them to two and still another condensed them even into one principle. Later when Judaism clashed with Christianity and still later when it clashed with Mohammedanism, Jewish philosophers again made an attempt to unravel the skein of Jewish law and ascertain its dominating principles, Maimonides established his famous creed of thirteen principles; Crescas reduced them to six and Albo reduced them to three. Similar

attempts were made at other times by various scholars and philosophers.

It seems that there was always felt a need for an exposé of a theological-historic development of Judaism, a fact so obviously manifested in many aspects of the Jewish Religion, and nevertheless, so vague and elusive whenever an attempt is made to clothe it in concrete form and express it in a clear-cut statement of principles. However, every one of the attempts to formulate such a framework of principles, made by the many prophets, philosophers and scholars, reveal, notwithstanding the cleverness with which it was constructed, a rather forced and frequently awkward pattern and the student has the feeling that all the traditions in their details of the Jewish Religion have been previously established and the framework of principles has come rather subsequently to justify their existence instead of being responsible for their coming into being.

That this should be the case is not astounding at all. The prophets, philosophers and scholars appeared on the arena long after Judaism had adopted certain forms. Judaism was already then to a certain extent congealed and even petrified. Every little detail of religious observance which took root in Jewish life was considered infallible and immutable and if a prophet, philosopher or scholar dared to seek one or several unifying and dominating principles, he had to, under all circumstances, allow a place for the accepted religious observances in circulation. To use a scientific

term, their methods were mainly "inductive," namely, they had to find such principles which should confirm and give justification to the established and prevalent religious conduct. This will reveal the cause for and reason of the awkwardness which accompanies the many forced explanations and the puerile attempts to adjust certain odd traditions with the artificial structure, which any philosophy of religion does invariably require to justify its theories.

It did not occur to any of these scholars to use the "deductive" method, that is to trace the Jewish Religion back to its origin, peel off the extraneous accretions and then follow its development downward in time, evolutionally. Such method would then have been considered heretical and might even have proven fatal to the respective expounder; in fact the people were psychologically not prepared for such an intellectual revolution. The Torah as a whole could not be doubted. Each detail in it, whether explicit or implicit, was a vital part of it. That the entire Torah and its implications were patterned in accordance with a definite design and based on a logical foundation, was beyond doubt to any of the prophets, philosophers and scholars. The only method, therefore, to find the dominating principles was the "inductive" one. Only one great scholar was bold enough to say that there are as many principles in the Torah as there are commandments, namely, six hundred and thirteen principles. From a religious point of view, he is closer to the truth than all the others.

To those who cannot ignore the principle of evolution, even in religion, and who see in Judaism an organic growth, this "inductive" method loses its glamour and certainly its authenticity. Its application smacks of artificial dialectics and certainly cannot give any peace of mind to inquisitive and turbulent intellects who wish to know the truth at any cost. However, as soon as you apply the "deductive" method, a new world opens before your eyes and with it Judaism assumes a different aspect altogether. It is far from true to maintain that if religion is anatomized, nothing but a corpse is left. This may be true of some religions, but certainly not of the Jewish religion. On the contrary, studying Judaism historically reveals a healthy philosophy as its starting point and manifests the true causes for its survival, its sources of resistance and vitality which are sufficient to allow it to flourish even in an age as skeptical and scrutinous as the one in which we live today.

The Bible as it has come down to us today is not a philosophy of religion. It is rather a cross-section of religious life as it existed in the first millenium before the common era. A person does not have to be a profound scholar to recognize in this cross-section various currents and forces. In it he finds survivals of early "Taboos" which percolated down through the generations and became so strongly imbedded in Jewish life during the first millenium to the extent that they became "religion." He also finds purely national elements, in the form of traditions intricately intertwined with the taboos to an inextricable degree. Last but not

least he finds theological beliefs and moral concepts coming down from time immemorial, casting a halo over all the rest of the traditions and acting as a protoplasmic bed in which the other traditions are placed as nuclei.

This is the picture that the Bible reflects to the keen eye of the student who is thoroughly acquainted with the history of religion in particular and the history of mankind in general, and any student of Jewish religion can easily recognize the traces of the continuous process of amalgamation persevering even in the post biblical and post talmudical periods. Once this thought emerges clearly and this point of view is adopted, one can readily see where the center of gravity of the Jewish religion lies.

Judaism may be, as is advocated by many, a civilization, although not as complete as others would have us believe. But it certainly is an amalgam of ancient taboos, surviving ritual forms, nationalistic elements and religious-moral principles. The *Jewish religion,* however, is that part of Judaism which deals purely and solely with the religious and moral elements, and these elements can only be recognized after a clear analysis is made of the entire biblical literature in its connection with history during its period of formation and even before it came into being, notwithstanding the fact that these religious-moral elements are extremely intertwined with the other elements and can be unravelled only with great difficulty.

That no advertent attempt was made to drown this

religious element is clearly revealed in the fact that Shvuoth is dedicated not to the law as a whole, but to the ten commandments. Simchath-Torah is dedicated to the former.

It is needless to say that the ten commandments represent the theological and moral principles of Judaism, in other words the ten commandments represent the Jewish religion in its original and simple element before it became a "compound."

The study of the ten commandments would, therefore, reveal the cause of Jewish survival and its strength of illimitable vitality.

The ten commandments begin with the belief in one God but this is not a purely theological problem. The Jew is not an abstract thinker. Even his beliefs possess practical value. The Jewish belief in one God leads to the belief in one humanity. If one God created the world then the entire human race was created by the same God. The story of Adam and Eve in the beginning of the Bible was placed there purposely to impress this belief, namely, that all of humanity can trace its origin to a common father and mother.

Respect for human life, respect for property, respect for the family tie, are the next principles. Naturally all this is the result and logical implications of the first belief in one God. Respect for the human mind and intellectual advancement is responsible for the commanding of the Sabbath—a rest day devoted to saintliness. Respect for tradition is expressed in the commandment of "Honor Thy Father and Mother." And

the solemn admonitions against lying, cheating and coveting are only the natural results of such beliefs. The ten commandments may be ten in number, but we can easily recognize the general underlying principles: the belief in one God, in one humanity, and equal privileges for all which underlie the entire structure of the ten commandments. It is in these ten commandments that we can find the original religious and moral sources of the Jewish religion and an historical study downward would no doubt clarify the process of the religious organic growth of Judaism.

The Jew, therefore, still has much to live for. The world is far from admitting a belief in one humanity. The principles of democracy in its true sense, not in its mere political parody, are far from being recognized, and the Jew still has not only a "belief" to live for, but a "battle" to fight for many generations to come, and until this belief is adopted by all, the Jewish religion still remains the heritage of a solitary people, and SHVUOTH, a festival peculiarly Jewish.

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THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

by

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This Shovuoth hour reminds us that Israel is the "People of Revelation." As on that day of yore when our fathers stood at the foot of Sinai, ready to receive the Divine Torah, so every Shovuoth, *Zeman mattan Torosenu,* we relive the ancestral thrilling Sinai experience. For Israel, the Sinai Revelation remained historic, because it marked the birth-hour of its Religion of the Spirit; it is also epochal in the history of humanity. Amid flames of fire that enveloped the smoking mountain, God's majestic Voice pronounced the Words that from that day to this have been the guide of conduct to mankind. Israel's *Assereth Hadibroth* became the code of universal ethics. The empire of the Decalogue shall never cease. "The word of our God shall stand forever."

With our hearts attuned to Heaven's overtures we, too, hear the voice of God, saying to us (Exod. 19:5):

> "Now therefore, if ye will hearken unto My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be Mine own treasure from among all peoples; for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

In these words, Holy Writ phrases Israel's historic destiny. Pre-eminently, stands out the fact that the God of all the earth chooses Israel as the kingdom of

Priests, to whom He reveals Himself, and with whom He makes a covenant so that Israel, the holy nation, may serve as the priest at the altar of humanity. At Sinai, Israel understood the purpose of his deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The children of the Patriarchs are not slaves of men, but servants of God. To remain a member of God's Kingdom of priests constitutes the highest destiny for every Israelite. The crown of priesthood, Rabbi Israel Friedman, of blessed memory, suggests in his *Yismah Yisrael,* is an inheritance; holiness is an achievement. Holiness, the keynote of our imperative, abiding moral law, is to leap from Israel like a "flame from a central fire," until it has warmed and illumined the whole world. Every other nation is like Israel the possession of God, the Creator of heaven and earth. When God says (Exod. 4:22).

"Israel is My son, My first-born"

the thought implied is that the other nations, too, are God's children; only that Israel as the first-born is God's precious, peculiar (used in the original connotation to denote "one's special possession") treasure. Therefore, it is Israel's prized duty to live the Sinai Law, to teach it to all men and so to be a blessing to all humanity.

THE ELECTION OF ISRAEL

This "unformulated" dogma—the Election of Israel—is a central idea in Judaism. Not only in the long ago, did the Mystic Voice of Sinai grip hearts and illumine

souls, but in every age Israel hears the Sinai Call. Its national genius for Religion "crystallized itself into the conviction" that Israel was Divinely chosen to teach men the way of the Lord. This pregnant idea runs like a golden thread through the Bible. In the beginning of time, God spoke to the father of our people, the patriarch Abraham (Gen. 12:2, 3) these words:

> "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great. And be thou a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

These words contain the germ idea of the Chosen People. Abraham's descendants, as the depository of Divine truth still bless the families of the earth. "With the change of one vowel," says the Midrash, "the Hebrew word for 'blessing' means 'spring of water.' Even as the waters of a spring purify the defiled, so Israel's Torah purifies all who drink from its waters of salvation, and brings them near to our Heavenly Father." In similar strain Leo Tolstoy spoke of the Jewish contribution to civilization as "the religious source-spring and fountain out of which all the rest of the people have drawn their beliefs and their religions."

At Sinai, Israel was charged with a message to mankind, and clothed with a mandate to teach God's Truth to all the children of earth. Israel's mission is to hold God's Truth in trust for humanity at large. The clearest expression of Israel's destiny is formulated in the

glowing words of the prophet Isaiah, who said, (Isa. 42:6, 7).

> "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness and have taken hold of thy hand and kept thee and set thee for a convenant of the people; for a light of the nation; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house."

Israel brought down from heaven "the everlasting fire" and became God's light unto the nations. Wherever Israel wandered as pioneer commonwealth builder, as refugee, or pilgrim, Israel opened blind eyes to see the God of all the earth. Gladly, Israel shared its blessings with all men. This Chosen-People concept is constantly emphasized in our liturgy.

> "Thou hast chosen us," we affirm, "from all peoples. Thou hast loved us and taken pleasure in us and hast exalted us above all tongues. Thou hast sanctified us by Thy commandments and brought us near unto Thy service, O, our King and hast called us by Thy great and holy Name."

That we are the *am bohar El* is woven into the very thought-fabric of our people. When a Jewish child is initiated into the covenant of Abraham, the rite of circumcision is "an abiding symbol of the consecration of the Children of Abraham to the God of Abraham." Honored with an *Aliyah,* the individual worshipper "called up" to honor the *Torah,* recites the benediction.

"Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God, King of the

universe, Who hast chosen us from all peoples, and hast given us Thy *Torah*."

The Sabbaths and Festivals not only "planted a heaven in every Jewish home," and spiritualized Jewish lives but year in, year out, proclaimed to Israel his Sinai Mission. Israel, the people of Revelation was chosen to bring the children of earth nearer to our Father in heaven. In the *Haftorah* message read on the Great Sabbath, the prophet Malachi pleads with Israel to remember the Law of Moses. Loyal to the Sinai Law, Israel will not cease to be, for the Lord does not change. In His own day, the prophet-people will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers, and the hearts of all to our Father in heaven.

THE UNIQUE DESTINY OF ISRAEL

Why was Israel chosen? Even Moses is represented by the Rabbis as asking God: "Why are the commandments of the Torah mostly addressed to the children of Israel?" And the Rabbis answer in the words of the Bible, (Deut. 7:7).

"The Lord did not . . . choose you because ye were more in number than any people, but because the Lord loved you."

Various are the answers given by the Rabbis. Some suggest that it was "the merit of the fathers" that made Israel chosen. Others believed that before "the creation of the world" Israel's election was pre-destined. The matter is to be compared to a king who was de-

siring to build; but when he was digging for the purpose of laying the foundations, he found only swamps and mire. At last, when he hit on a rock, he said, "Here I will build." Some Rabbis maintain that Israel's claim rests on intrinsic worth. The people of Israel were chosen because of their humility, their holiness, their resignation under oppression. God chooses the persecuted ones as His servants. Witness the life-story of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David. The oppressed are chosen for leadership.

Keeping God's commandments, Israel is worthy to be prince, ruler, witness, unto the nations. "Israel is not a nation, to the Rabbis at least, by virtue of race or of certain peculiar political combinations." This thought the Gaon Saadiah expressed in the words, "Because our nation is only a nation by reason of its *Torah.*" Not only did Israel receive the *Torah,* but he lived its commandments. The *sine qua non* of the election doctrine, is obedience to the *Torah.* Our history has corroborated the mystic thought that God, Israel, and the *Torah* are one. The *Torah* is Israel's Tree of Life.

Again, other Rabbis suggest that God's love is not given as a reward but as a free-will gift. God is Israel's lover. Commenting upon the words of the Prophet Hosea, "I will love them freely," the Rabbis say in God's name, "I love Israel even though they are not worthy." We re-echo the words of the prophet Samuel (I Sam. 12:22).

"For the Lord will not forsake His people for His

great name's sake; because it hath pleased the Lord to make you a people unto Himself."

This promise spoken to the Patriarchs was preached by the prophets and is emphasized alike by the teachers of the Talmud, the medieval poet, and modernist thinker. Daily we voice this truth when we affirm,

"Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who hast chosen Thy people Israel in love."

THE WORLD'S CHALLENGE

This conviction that Israel is the Chosen People rests, as we have seen, on ample Biblical authority, and yet it is challenged by the world. Men question the genuineness of our belief, and deny, in scorn or derision, that Israel is God's chosen People.

Because we live in a non-Jewish, often hostile environment, we too all unconsciously absorb the cynical, questioning mood and also doubt this fundamental Jewish doctrine. Some of us do not understand the glory of being God's instrument, and we want to run away from the responsibility of God's choice.

From time to time, various arguments are advanced against the idea that the Jews are a Chosen People. It is alleged that it is not true, today. In our day, every nation is divinely chosen. In the dim distant past when the world was shrouded in the darkness of idolatry, Israel, because of its magnificent adventure of faith in an unseen God, was superior to its pagan neighbors; and then the children of the patriarchs were by com-

mon consent acclaimed a Chosen People. Today, this Election dogma of Israel is antiquated and obsolete.

Further, even if there were, today, some justification for this claim, it should not be pressed because such a claim is clannish, and chauvinistic. This conviction, it is argued, puts a needless handicap on the Jew. It is a physical and spiritual liability for a people to attempt to live up to so high an ideal. The assumption that each Jew belongs to a select, distinct, and distinguished group will lead the unworthy Jew to shift his responsibility while the good Jew is needlessly dragged down by the terrific responsibility of a social solidarity not of his choosing. For a single individual to stand even a little while on the spiritual heights of the saint is not easy; it is next to impossible to mould ordinary men and women into a community of saints and a kingdom of priests. Finally, this arrogant claim of superiority jeopardizes, in an unfriendly world, the whole Jewish nation. It is a dangerous role to play. This "holier than thou" attitude savors of arrogance and puts the Jew on a superior-race pedestal, and naturally rouses against him bigoted racial rancor, religious hatred, fanatic prejudice and commercial jealousy. At best, they say, the Jew is "on trial." Why play with fire where powder is around!

To answer these claims and charges is not difficult. The doubters and questioners do not understand the Jewish conception of the Chosen People. Once we grasp clearly the basic assumptions of this Chosen People concept, these misunderstandings will melt as

the fog melts when the sun breaks through the clouds.

To begin with the beginning, may I make clear that Israel would never have dared to assume so heroic a destiny, if it were not dinned into his ears by the Voice of God, spoken through His chosen messengers, the prophets. A little girl said to her father, "I did not want to stay in, this afternoon, to decorate the room; but I could not help it. My teacher chose me to do the work." Israel was chosen by the Divine Teacher to do the spiritual work of the world.

To deny this Election dogma is to deny that for the Jew, Judaism is the superior Creed. It is not "national vanity," but a national instinct expressing in the Election dogma, the spiritual national genius of the Jewish people. Not Israel is superior to the peoples of the world, but the world-embracing, all-compelling Sinai revelation stands out unique and unchallenged in its supremacy. Because of the Sinai Code, Israel brought humanity a new angle of vision towards the Infinite, vindicated the eternal values of life, fathomed the secrets of holiness, and guided men to spiritual and social well-being. It behooves every Jew to "hold aloft the traditional Jewish ideals inflexibly until the world shall become capable of recognizing their worth."

As the Hoffetz Hayim, of blessed memory, expressed it, "Do not charge me with arrogance because I believed that Israel is divinely chosen." God said, as Holy Writ tells us, (Lev. 20:26). "I have set you apart from the peoples that ye should be Mine." Had Israel not been divinely chosen, its story would have lost it-

self in "the sands of the desert." Because of its historic destiny, Israel's story "issues in eternity."

Clannish as this conception seems to be, Claude G. Montefiore reminds us, that it really sounds "more partial" than it is. When we remember that God is the Creator of all things and the Father of all mankind, Israel, it is understood, is chosen to minister to all His children. Israel holds his Truth in trust for humanity at large. Each nation may contribute its share to the Messianic age. God's Door of Service, as His Road to Heaven, is open to all, regardless of race or creed. A kingdom of priests, Solomon Schechter pointed out, needs the world for its parish. As a priest people, Israel is to bring all peoples closer to God and righteousness. The ultimate hope is that some day "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Nor is there favoritism in God's choice, since God's call has not been to privilege and rulership, but to martyrdom and service.

> "Ye are My witness," saith the Lord, "and My servant whom I have chosen." (Isa. 43:10.)

Israel, the prince and ruler of peoples, is to be the light-bringer to the world. Fashioned to publish God's praise, Israel became the world's Suffering Servant. His steadfastness under suffering consecrated and ennobled the Jew. With heroic self-sacrifice he wears his crown of martyrdom as a badge of honor.

And if voicing his destiny, the Jew awakens an added

measure of bigotry and prejudice and hate against him, he is content to suffer the hazardous consequences, as the price of his conviction. For the sake of his ideals the Jew stood alone against a world, with the strong swift tides of paganism running furiously against him. With lion-like courage Israel faced the unutterable terrors of a night of persecution that lasted eighteen hundred years. With Leopold Zunz we say,

> "If the duration of sorrows and the patience with which they are borne ennoble, the Jews can challenge the aristocracy of every land."

In spite of the blandishments and the persecutions of Church and State, the Jew still clings to his eternal Truth. For the sake of His appointed task, Israel still withstands the fanaticism and bigotry and prejudice of a cruel world.

At best, you can not reason with prejudice. The Jew can never satisfy the anti-Semite. In his autobiography, *Mein Weg als Deutscher und Jude*, Jakob Wassermann powerfully presents the thought that the Jew can not please the Jew-hater. "In vain," all his attempts: To live for them or to die for them is equally in vain. When a Jew keeps faith as a comrade in arms or a fellow citizen, they sneeringly point at him the finger of scorn and hiss the word, "Proteus"—he can assume my form. Every noble sacrifice they discountenance with the slanderous allegation, "No doubt he found it profitable." Does the Jew offer the hand of friendship and fellowship, he is criticized for his aggressive obtrusive-

ness. Were the Jew to seek obscurity then the scatter-brained man of hate brands him "a coward, creeping into hiding, driven by an evil conscience." The normal Jew does not regulate his life to suit the whim of the anti-Semite. Rather he glories in his privileged membership in God's Kingdom of priests.

Let us shed our ignoble liabilities, not our moral responsibilities. We must renounce ignoble things not because it will stop "the ravings and frothings of hatred and injustice" or cause prejudice to grow less. Prejudice, "like carrion breeding maggots, breeds prejudice." But it will make the slanderous prejudices powerless to hurt.

An ancient homilist tells us that when the cruel Haman issued the decree sealed by the signet of King Ahasuerus, to annihilate the Jews, "the saints among the dead" the patriarchs and prophets united with Mordecai and Esther "the saints of the living generation" in their prayers that "the doom might be averted from Israel." Their prayers were of no avail. In despair Elijah cries to Moses, "O faithful shepherd, the edict of annihilation is written and sealed by God." Then Moses replies, "If the edict is sealed with wax, your prayers will be heard; if with blood, then all is in vain."

Anti-Semitism is not caused by a taint in the Jewish blood; in our veins courses the blood of patriarchs and prophets. It is caused by the "wax" of prejudice, so that their hearts are fat, their eyes shut and their ears heavy; they do not understand the seer's challenge, (Mal. 2:10).

"Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?"

Some Jews look upon this Election dogma not as a lie nor a libel but as an excuse to shift their responsibility and shirk their duty under the communal cloak of the Chosen People. Others are recreant to their trust; they are indifferent to the sacred cause of *Kenesseth Yisroel.* Ignoring the common weal, they live their selfish lives and shelter themselves in their course of action, by the idea that "it is my affair." "It is your affair," pleads a moralist of our day, "but it is also mine and the community's." Nor can we neglect the world beyond. A fierce light beats upon the Jew; and you can not escape from it, even if you choose to ignore it.

Let one Jew profane the Divine Name, and "the wild beasts in man"—blind prejudice and causeless hatred—will be unchained against all Israel.

This doctrine of the Chosen People is to many Jews a stumbling block; they feel that because of it the world expects too much from the Jew, and that he can not live up to the world's expectations. To these hesitant Jews we say, that Israel expects of every Jew to live up to God's expectations. The world has a right to demand of the Jew, who stood at Sinai, a higher ethical standard of living. It is not a liability but an opportunity. This sublime mission puts us on our mettle. This obligation is a deterrent from sin and spur to noble action. Israel's sacred task is not a weight but a wing, not a burden but a blessing. Not for material gain does Israel struggle, but for spiritual self-

conquest. "The painful preacher" Benjamin Franklin reminds us, "like a candle bright consumes himself in giving others light." Israel, the world's Burning Bush, is not consumed.

Because of our *Zechuth Aboth;* because the blood of Patriarchs and Prophets flows in our veins; because we are the elders among the nations, representing the oldest surviving civilization; because we have accepted a Divine mandate, to be a blessing in the world, the Jew, a member of the great historic Brotherhood, must act as witness for life's noblest ideals. He must cease to do evil and learn to do well. Consecrating his life, the Jew surrenders his will to do the will of his Father in Heaven. *Noblesse oblige!* As a categoric imperative comes to us the warning.

"Be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord." (Isa. 52:11.)

Moreover, Israel accepts this choice not in arrogance but in humility, not as a privilege but as a responsibility.

Possession of the *Torah* is not an end but a "means to a greater end." In the days yet to come, the prophet-hope will be realized, that all will call upon God's Name, and serve Him with one consent. By accepting the Torah, Israel made peace between God and His world. "If the legend of the conquering Jew," Israel Zangwill writes, "means his emergence from 'that curious system of degrading customs and debasing laws' not merely not broken-hearted, but able to pour forth streams of courageous vitality in every field of life and

thought, 'a blessing to all the families of the earth,' then the legend would be true indeed." It is our destiny to usher in the era of the Messiah with its music of happiness and righteousness. We proclaim the new day when God's anointed leader will bind the children of flesh into a Brotherhood of Justice, Love, Peace, and Liberty, and will unite all men to call upon God's Name alone so that our world will be perfected under the Kingdom of the Almighty.

If as God's messengers we raise up man's level, and are at the same time lifted up, we claim no credit. With the Psalmist, Israel says, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name, give glory." To the prophet the call came: "Lift up thy voice like a *Shofar*" (Isa. 58:1.) The thought implied is, that as the *Shofar* is merely the instrument that awakens the sleeping conscience of men, so the prophet, the preacher, the novelist, or the artist who touches the hearts of men, stirs their souls and elevates them; it is not because he pretends to stand on a pedestal and "God-like raises up lost souls." He is merely the instrument dowered with gifts from Heaven. Israel, touched by the grace of humility, is the human instrument of God's holy revelation.

To all Jews we say, "All Israelites," in the phrase of the Talmud, "are mutually accountable for each other." We Jews have a responsibility more pressing than perhaps any other people. Every Israelite holds in his hands the honor of his Faith and of his entire people.

"A single Jew's offence can bring shame on the whole House of Israel."

In a striking apologue, the Rabbis picture a boat full of men, at sea. One of them thoughtlessly began to bore a hole in the bottom of the boat. When his fellow passengers remonstrated with him he blurted out irresponsibly, "I am only boring under my own seat." "What of that," angrily replied his comrades. "When the sea rushes in, we shall all be drowned."

What a symbol of the solidarity of Israel! Its "weal or woe" is in the hands of every single Jew. "He ought to live such a life," Dr. Cyrus Adler urges, "that no shadow of reproach against the Jewish people will ever be brought through him." Belonging to the Brotherhood of Israel, each Jew is ennobled. Cherishing the inextinguishable hope of the Brotherhood of man, Israel became "a community blessed by the Lord."

THE TESTIMONY OF HISTORY

Israel is God-chosen, not only because our sacred Scriptures teach it, but also because Jewish history confirms it. Throughout the ages, Israel was the God-choosing-people. And as long as Israel is faithful to the Sinai Code, so long is God's mandate not annulled or abrogated. We will remain set apart and distinguished as long as we will cling to our eternal commandments.

Four thousand years and more we stood upon the world's battle fields, while civilizations were struggling

for supremacy. But during all these years we carried aloft one Banner, the *Torah,* and from age to age passed on God's Torch of Truth as an ever-living flame. Ours is "the faith that the dark past has taught us," ours is "the hope that the present has brought us."

Reading the pages of our history we have been taught to interpret anew and aright the "august dramas" of the passing years. We watched the world forces advancing "with irresistible power on the world's stage," we saw "tremendous entrances and exits," old peoples going off the stage of life and youthful nations take their place. Miraculous is the story of the Jew! As a people we have seen the grandeur of Babylon buried beneath the dust of the ages. Only the Pyramids—the monuments of the dead—remind us of the greatness that was Egypt. A crumbling Arch of Titus speaks of the glory of Rome that is no more. Gone the contemporary people of the Patriarchs; broken is the power of every people that persecuted the Jew. The one uniform lesson of history is this:

> "That the nations which have received and in any way dealt fairly and mercifully with the Jew have prospered; and that the nations that have tortured and oppressed him, have written out their own curse."

Paraphrasing the Midrash story of the nations passing in procession before the Throne of the Eternal Ruler of the Universe, we still say that Israel alone keeps aburning the Torch of the *Torah.*

Characterizing the soul as God's Ambassador on earth, Thomas Mann writes,

> "But it will sometimes happen that an ambassador from one Kingdom to another and hostile one, if he stay there for long will fall a prey to corruption from his own country's point of view, gliding unconsciously over to the other's habits of thought and favoring its interests, settling down and adapting himself and taking on colour, until at last he becomes unavailable as a representative of his own world. This or something like this must be the experience of the spirit in its mission. The longer it stops below, the longer it plies its diplomatic activities the more they suffer from an inward breach not to be concealed from the higher spheres and in all probability leading to its recall."

Israel is still God's Spiritual Ambassador. We must not play false to our Sinai Charge by taking on chameleon like the colour of the world's cultures, lest we become unavailable as a representative of the Torah life. And from the "higher spheres" will ring out the doom, *Kaleh nevuoscho vezeh.*

Once Israel is no longer the prophet people, it will step off the stage of the world, recalled from its ambassadorship, as the Chosen People.

We have a right to assert that we are a Chosen People as long as we release the forces which are changing, purifying and regenerating the world, which idealize the destiny of men and the goal of humanity. We have taught the world the unique reality, unity and spirit-

uality of the Infinite God,—and the dignity and the divinity of man fashioned in God's image. Dowered with an immortal soul, his human body wondrously and fearfully fashioned is more than "sheep's carcass" in a butcher's shop; it is a Temple of God. With a new angle of vision toward the Infinite, all understand that God's universe is not chaos but a cosmos. A Divine purpose runs through the universe "transfusing all life as with a hidden flame." Sensing the Divine Presence, we realize that life is not one huge mistake, "a fury flinging flame." Time is not "a maniac scattering dust." Often we see only the reverse side of God's design; and the twisted threads of the tapestry of life present to us not a beautiful, planned pattern, but a crazy caricature. At best we read God's thoughts only in retrospect. We cannot see "His face." Time marches morally onward and upward. Man is not a puppet strutting for a brief life-span upon the stage of time.

If, in a black moment of despair, I contemplate our universe through the dark spectacles of the cynics of our day and vision a universe turned into barbarism; our machine age transforming men into robots; our invented tools scrapped into junk; our skyscrapers crumbling into dust; everything that we call civilization—wireless, automobile, radio, aeroplane, the epoch-working inventions—forgotten from the minds of men, there are some things that will remain; mother-love is more eternal than the stars. So eternal also is the quest of goodness and of righteousness and of holiness, the adventurous search after truth, the hunger and

yearning for communion with God, the world's Creator and Guide.

No matter what political, economic, or moral tidal waves sweep over our earth, its spiritual foundations are not washed away. No wind, blowing with the blighting, destructive hurricane force of a tornado, can blow off the accumulated experience of the ages writ in the hearts of men and women. No earthquake, no cosmic cataclysm that will crumble the earth as an egg shell or quench the light of the stars, can snuff out the flame of a divine torch or change one jot or tittle, a *"Kutzo shel Yod,"* of a Divine ordinance. Governments may change their form; money standards may come and go; measurements of civilization may be discarded by our swiftly changing modes of life; but life's fundamental ideals named nobility, goodness, righteousness, can not change. The Sinai Code is timeless.

The struggling giants standing on God's Holy Hill, in Bialik's poem-parable, still bend their knees to the imcomparable Moses. Conquered or defeated, our Truth has ever triumphed. Its ideals are like fragrant flowers, precious fruit and golden wheat that have filled the world with fragrance and with food. Eternal is our contribution to the world's storehouse of knowledge. Our Judaism is like a central sun in the sky of humanity to shine for all men. By choosing God and cleaving unto His Commandments, we have become the immortal people.

GOD'S WITNESSES

We are still the people who witness for the *Torah* conception of God—the one infinite Creator and loving Father. In their quest of God, human beings need our direction and guidance.

In the ancient Grecian games, that runner would be crowned with the laurel leaf of victory who would not merely run his race swiftly and win his goal, but also keep his torch lit. This is the meaning of our *Ner Tamid* burning forever in all the Synagogues of the world. Judaism is a perpetual lamp. Forever we must keep its flame aglow.

Teaching the world the existence of spiritual values, and the abiding sense of their worth, we have put eternity into human hearts; the searching for truth; the sincere, and the reverent longing for happiness; and the quest of holiness.

The world still needs Israel as the providentially-appointed teacher to bring light, truth, hope, salvation. Nothing but the light from our *Torah* can "dispel the fog" or "lighten the twilight" of our cruel age and broken-down world of fear and hate, of paganism and barbarism. Ours is the privilege to point the way to the *Torah*-life of righteousness, loving-kindness, peace, and holiness. The world hungers for our conception of Religion as coextensive with life. Judaism does not merely speculate about the mystery of God, but also postulates the Code that shows men how to master life.

We live, it is true, in a broken-down world. All

peoples are haunted by fear. But Israel, the heart of humanity, feels the world's sorrow not only because of our sympathy, but also because of our actual suffering. There are millions of helpless, starving, homeless Jews, who in these times of peace live through the horrors of hated war.

In this bewildered age impatient with the moral authority of the Sinai statutes we see men and women take refuge in the cobwebs of cynicism and look for cold comfort in a degrading brutal materialism or a liberal humanism. We hear the clamorous discordant voices of the street shout into our ears the old-new, outworn philosophies clothed in a threadbare atheism, a deadening disillusionment or in a shadowy agnosticism. Many of us cling to the brutal, coarse things of life and pursue the pagan, trivial, and shoddy aims of existence. Therefore, the need of the hour is for men and women gifted with God's Sinai spirit, who can hold together the moral fabric of the universe.

THE SINAI VOICE

O, Israel this Holy day is charged with destiny. In this sacred hour reminiscent of the Sinai Revelation, let us again choose to be holy unto God.

We must live in this hazardous world. But we are the world's Elders. As we stand on the hills of time, our horizon is as wide as the universe. As children of the Chosen People, we have the God of the universe as our Captain and Companion; the Creator is our loving Father. Let us proclaim the good tidings of

peace, hope, happiness, and salvation. Believing in Israel's destiny, we too will vision the Divine Order in Nature. Because of our consecrated call that challenges the Jewish conscience, we will cement the strands of Jewish solidarity and forge anew the golden threads of Jewish dignity and loyalty; and at the same time grasp the grandeur of the dignity, and the sanctity of each man and woman, clothed with deathless glory, equipped to play his part in making of this earth a symbol of Heaven.

We whose ancestors stood at Sinai know that God's Voice is not stilled in His Universe. Because of the Sinai Revelation, there is an abiding hunger for Jewish ideals. Wherever a prayer rises from human hearts that the clash of arms never again resound; wherever there is a ray of hope for the oppressed, the defeated, the underprivileged of society; when victories are won for justice and righteousness; when dreamers vision a nobler humanity proclaiming the Fatherhood of God and its corollary the Brotherhood of man, it is because the Shovuoth message, first heard on Sinai, implanted in the heart of the Jew echoed and re-echoed in the hearts of all men. The message of Sinai charges us with a Divine Mission, to obey God's *Torah.*

Dowered with the spiritual vision of Israel, we make of life not only a path to walk on, but the King's Highway leading Godward. Standing now at the cross-roads of humanity, we will lift men to the Sinai heights and make them conscious of their divinity. We are all children of God, worthy to stand on God's Holy Hill;

and as we ascend the mountain of vision may we lift up the world upon the new foundation of faith, hope and love, so that homes may be happier and holier, and lives nobler. With faith all may vision behind the comedy-tragedy of existence, the Finger of God. Of our *Torah,* we say that God gave it to us in His gracious love. *Zevi veisrei von umesor lon oraitho.* Oh that God's Truth would again touch our lives with holiness and transfigure our daily tasks, so that eagerly we might do the will of our Father in Heaven.

Grateful for all blessings paid for by the tears and sacrifices of others, let us weave gratitude into the pattern of our thinking and translate it into service so that our sympathy will flow as a fountain. In the *Bikkurim* spirit let us joyously share God's good gifts with the hungry and hopeless in our midst, who cry for bread, and know not whence their help will come. Let love kindle in our hearts a spiritual hunger—for man does not live by bread only,—so that we may transform our pious wishes into practical deeds of righteousness and loving-kindness. Let faith lead us so that brotherhood and social justice will strengthen and spiritualize our personal and social relations. Loyal to our ancestral covenant, we will continue the best traditions of our never-ending heroic history; weave the soul-dreams and forge the practical spiritual tools in our machine age; and under God's guidance make our *Torah* great and glorious.

Each one of us feels this hallowed Shovuoth morning. *Immi ha-yoo ha-dibbros,* God spoke to me. Let

us re-echo the angel-refrain—*Na'aseh Venishmah,* "We will do; we will hear."

The covenant God made with Israel in righteousness, in love, and in faithfulness, is an eternal one. My hope and prayer is, *Kevi-in Ken tehevon behanhu havorotho,* that you and I and Israel everywhere be numbered in the priestly Brotherhood of our people, and thus worthily play our part in the living present. Israel, blessed and chosen of the Lord must ever remain as Dr. Israel Friedlander hoped, "a sharply marked community, distinct and distinguished, trusted for its loyalty, respected for its dignity, esteemed for its traditions, valued for its aspirations." By the nobility and divinity of our lives, we publish and prove the divinity of our *Torah.*

We the children of the Chosen People believe with perfect faith that the Eternal God, Creator, Lawgiver, and Father, revealed Himself through His Divine *Torah* to deathless Israel, and that through Israel, redeemed and regenerated, consecrated at Sinai as God's Kingdom of priests, and holy nation, the families of the earth are blessed.

AMEN

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"THE JEW AND IDEALISM"

by

FELIX A. LEVY

"Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to Moses. Say to my children, Even as I am distinct, let them be distinct, even as I am holy, let them be holy."

—Midrash Rabba.

Over three millenia ago, our ancestors, according to Biblical story, and later legend, stood at the foot of Mt. Sinai and received the Ten Words. With the giving of the Commandments, Jewish Idealism was born, and each year of the thirty-three or four succeeding centuries has found the Jew observing the anniversary of the birth of his ideals. For after all, that is what the giving of the Decalogue, connected by legend with Shabuoth, implies. Israel received a national or universal ideal in the desert. The wild, enslaved Bedouin tribe, with no loftier ambition than that of its modern marauding Arab kinsmen, was transformed into a people, because it had become impregnated with the germ of what was to flower into the highest idealism.

None of the products of man's intelligence is more universally common than ideals. Wherever people congregate into society, there ideals find expression. No individual is without them, however degraded his state, however deep in poverty or misery he may be sunk. Ideals range from the simple desire for self-preservation to a plan for mankind's moral regeneration. As many different men, so many diverging ideals;

as many peoples, so many varieties of aims. Just as each man has his ideal, so have nations and communities theirs. Venice cherished, above all, political freedom; Rome strove for world power; Germany was obsessed by a passion for orderliness and system. Religions, too, may be approached from the view-point of their ideals, and these vary from the auto-intoxication of the savage soothsayer to the calm, resolute resignation of the non-resisting Tolstoy or Garrison. Ideals are ever present, giving character to the individual, people or faith.

We call some ideals higher than others. The man whose sole concern is to absorb food, who lives like his primitive ancestor—lives to eat—we would hardly credit with noble aspirations. Nor would we place on the same level, the black head-hunter of Australia, whose chief concern is to lay before his lady love, the ghastly trophy of his enemy's skull, as a symbol of his affection, with the deeds of charity and benevolence that are daily occurrences in our midst. Nor would we say of the Greek ideal of beauty, strong and world-impressive as it has been, and still is, that it is higher than that which holds "Love thy neighbor as thyself" as the aim of life. Yet each of these ideals is a powerful social and religious stimulus, and its possessor would undergo any sacrifice, before exchanging or surrendering it.

What we call "higher" involves what has become a moral or religious truth. The ideal of helping the poor

is evidently far superior to that of killing our enemies. The ordinary and accepted meaning of an ideal is that conception which, if realized, would result in the amelioration of mankind's state, the strengthening of the bonds of fellowship among men, the elevation of the species. Progress has been the application to life of a series of ideals on an ascending scale, which had for its lowest level the attainment of bodily comfort. In this scale, each successive step represents a higher ideal than that immediately beneath it. In this discourse we shall connote by ideal, a higher spiritual or religious aim.

Progress would be very fast, indeed, if ideals could be realized quickly or if there were naught to contend with in the effort to put them into effect. Life, however, is not given solely to the birth and promulgation of the ideal; the contrary is often the case. There seem to be two warring factions, the ideal and its opposite. In the metropolitan museum at New York is a statue by St. Gaudens, "The Eternal Struggle" and it represents the conflict of man's dual nature, angel and beast. The divine after a terrible battle subdues the brute, trampling him under foot. Yet the victory is not won without a penalty, for in the moment of conquest, the ugly prostrate beast in his death throes sinks his teeth into the flesh of his beautiful adversary. This corresponds to the rabbinical conception of the struggle for man's possession, between his two impulses, the *Yezer Ha-Ra* and the *Yezer Tov*—the innate human tendencies to good and evil. In proportion as the good

predominates over the baser element in the human being, we come nearer the ideal, nearer to God, nearer to realizing life's meaning.

Just see, what the triumph of the evil inclination, i. e., the absence of the ideal, or the victory of its antitype, means. Man is reduced to the level of the beast, who can have no pain except physical hurt, no joy except that of the flesh, no hope except that of material gain. Without a higher aspiration, man would be like the purposeless jelly-fish that exists merely to grow. It is the possession of ideals that makes us human, and adds the human element to life. Their existence causes our sorrows, but at the same time, sweetens these very sorrows and makes them bearable. It is the possession of ideals that makes the joys of life, but tempers and chastens them; it is the possession of ideals that extends the sympathies, broadens the love, and enables man really to live, and to rise above amoeba-like vegetation. Ideals are our existence. They make our life worth living by giving assurance and encouragement and hope, that our presence has contributed—be it ever so infinitesimally—to the store of the world's happiness and well-being.

This holy day emphasizes the necessity of having ideals. The commandments as a whole present an ideal, and each of the ten sentences represents also an ideal. Jewish life since the wilderness days has found a great and important place for ideals. No other people has endured more on account of its ideals than ours. The Jews' survival is due to their refusal to lower their

ethical standard, and to their suffering for this obstinacy. Fires of hatred could not persuade the Jew to change his conception of life, and today he lives stronger than ever before, and, let us hope, more firmly entrenched in his three thousand year old idealism. The nations that were contemporary to him at the moment of Sinai's revelation, where are they? Babylon and its materialism have vanished and stronger peoples have absorbed the descendants and the culture of Sargon and Hammurabi. Carefree Egypt, which enslaved the Hebrews, has itself been sold into foreign serfdom, and the splendor that was once the Nile's is now a memory, an undecipherable record. Greece with all its youthful enthusiasm for beauty never lived to attain a virile manhood, let alone enjoy the repose of a calm old age; yet the descendants of the serious, possessed, fanatic Bedouin of Canaan, today still proclaim Jahwe as God, and his words as life's commandments. Neither exile nor persecution, neither dispersion nor oppression, could quench the fire of their zeal, the ardor of their belief. The word proclaimed on Sinai's mount has reverberated throughout the ages, has encircled the globe so that today, it is of all times, of all places, of all peoples. Where it is not, there are savagery and moral darkness.

We are proud that our message to the world is that of the ideal. We are often taken to task for this boast, and are accused of lacking just that whose possession we proclaim so loudly to the world. This is not strange for on all sides, one sees Jews who fail to live up to

the ideals of their fathers. How many of us know, I wonder, anything of Judaism's ideals? How many know what the great Jewish ideal is—the very core of our religious teachings, the Jewish conception of life? Let us try to picture for ourselves the Jewish ideal that grew out of the words that were given on Mt. Sinai in the wilderness.

The central thought in Jewish doctrine is the *Malkuth Shamayim* the kingdom of Heaven or of God. The kingdom of God has nothing to do with the world to come, as might be thought, but is of the earth. Judaism has always insisted on the "this worldliness" of its profession. The *Malkhuth Shamayim* as some one has well said is "a sense of our responsibility toward the Heavenly King, who is concerned with and superintends our actions." We are to pattern our earth after God's heaven. This kingdom of God presupposes a *Malkhuth Kohanim,* a kingdom of priests. The two are the obverse and reverse of the same shield. To realize God's kingdom, we must all be His ministering messengers of good, God's servants must do the good and live the truth. Everything that is wrong, be it in private or public life, in state or in family, is incompatible with God's kingdom and its earthly priesthood. This kingdom is a religious, an ethical ideal, and is totally unlike the eschatological kingdom of the Christians.

Do not think that the formation of the kingdom of God, even though the thought emanates from our religion, is to be confined to Jews alone. Its advent is to

be hastened by all mankind. Our rabbis say, "Abraham addressed himself to other peoples besides his own." The whole world is to be a priesthood ministering at the altar of God. The end of man's striving, his goal, is the kingdom of God, and the instrument for its attainment is the kingdom of earthly priests. This thought is closely interwoven with another great Jewish ideal—the hope of the messianic era, when universal brotherhood and peace shall reign.

Jewish ideals are of and for this world, and are possible of attainment if sufficient effort be put forth in that direction. Man, himself, you and I, are to bring about this consummation, we are not dependent on an extraneous agency or mediator. The means for perfecting God's kingdom are simply the reverence of God and the love of man. This ideal of the Malkuth is not merely a religious one. It includes besides ethical and economic teachings, e. g., justice is to reign on earth because God is a just judge. God's Zedakah is to find a counterpart in man's rule of loving kindness and mercy.

This patterning of earth after heaven, of man after God, is a fundamental idea of our religion. Jews have read Thomas à Kempis Imitatio Christi, and have admired the deeply spiritual utterances of the saint, yet we have the higher doctrine of Imitatio Dei, the imitation of God, with which thought our prayers are saturated and which has found an important place in our liturgy. Take but this one of many instances. "Ye shall

be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy people, because I, the Lord, your God, am holy." Thus man's striving for holiness means naught but that he should attempt to pattern his life after God whom he has clothed in idealism, as our text from the Midrash eloquently testifies.

This demand that the Jew be like his God, was a saving grace. It kept Jewish philosophy and Jewish thinking sane and wholesome. The Jew never made the mistake of running to either of the two extremes, of altruism, or of egoism. The former denies to the individual all right of self-expression; the latter insists on it. The former teaches to live only for others, whatever be the cost to self; the latter, to live only for self whatever be the penalty that one's fellow-man pays. Judaism recognized and insisted on man's individual freedom, but it also taught a responsibility toward mankind.

Besides the personal aspects, this has social and economic aspects. Social misery, our teachers insist, is not a necessary evil, but can and should be eradicated. Poverty, pain and suffering need not be, but can be lessened and exterminated, if the world is made a kingdom of God, and each citizen in this commonwealth lives a life in imitation of the higher ideals. If our great industrial employers occasionally had God in their hearts instead of on their lips, how quickly the unhappy lot of the masses would be exchanged for satisfaction and contentment!

In this rapid survey, we have but touched upon Is-

rael's ideals. Let the message of the Shabuoth, the anniversary of the giving of God's law, be that of the function of the ideal in life. The value of this ideal lies in its application on our part. We find in our Jewish view of life, duties for the individual and society, for home and synagogue, for private and public life, for family and community. Can you find any other ideal that surpasses it in saneness, in practicability? It is human and at the same time is tinged with the spirit of the divine. Why then abandon our Jewish ideals, as so many in our ranks do, and run after strange, not to say false, philosophies. Our Jews, ignorant of their own, are attracted by non-Jewish ideals, a shallow rationalism, a blatant anarchistic agnosticism, a mystic, incredible Christian Science. These claim the allegiance of many of our people instead of the old Sanctuary of God on earth, in which every human being is a priest who ministers to all his fellows. This concept asks no impossibilities but expects simply that each one of us perform his task in life with the single object of realizing it. Today we renew the pledge given by our ancestors at the foot of the mountain, on the first Shabuoth. Like them we, too, will promise *"Na-aseh V'nishma,"* "We will do and we will obey." We will hearken to the call of the Jewish ideal, we will practice the Jewish virtue, we will live the Jewish life. If this be the rule of conduct that we follow, we will do our share towards bringing that goal nearer toward which an earnest humanity is striving—the day of universal righteousness and of happiness for all. Amen.

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